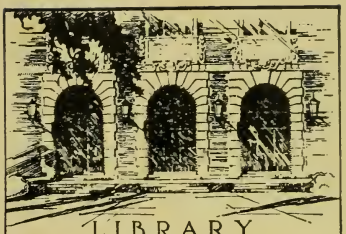

LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
Or5s
v.4

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

http://www.archive.org/details/soldiersfamilyor04orms

THE

SOLDIER'S FAMILY;

OR,

GUARDIAN GENII.

A ROMANCE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY ANNE ORMSBY,

AUTHOR OF MEMOIRS OF A FAMILY IN SWISSERLAND.

VOL. IV.

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

St. Matthew v. 48.

LONDON:

Printed by J. G. Barnard, Snow-hill,

FOR E. CROSBY AND CO. STATIONERS'-COURT, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1807.

823
Or5s
v. 4

THE

SOLDIER'S FAMILY;

OR,

GUARDIAN GENII.

CHAP. I.

"The great Creator of the universe extends His care to all who solicit it with pious trust."

IN a conscientious discharge of all religious and social duties, and in the regulation of her mind, Erina passed her days in that calm enjoyment which invariably accompanies a life well spent, and virtuous dispositions.

The prince, in the meanwhile, observed her conduct with increasing admiration, as he remarked, in an intimate association with her, those delicate traits of her character, which distinguished her as

pre-eminently amiable. In the hope that he had made a considerable progress in her esteem, he daily sought an opportunity of disclosing to her the state of his heart, and soliciting her hand. His parents, with whom he maintained a constant and most confidential correspondence, entirely approved his intentions; and the princess, his mother, to whom he had minutely described the object of his ardent love, had, with maternal solicitude, expressed her ardent wishes for a union so accordant in all points with her ideas. Those letters from his adored parent, the prince anxiously desired an opportunity of presenting to Erina for her perusal, not only to sanction his addresses, but to introduce, to her own knowledge, a character she had already learned to esteem from his account of her virtues.

Baffled as he had long been in seeking an occasion in which he could introduce the tender theme in which his heart was most deeply interested, the prince looked forward with eager expectation to a masked ball, in hopes it might afford him an opportunity of disclosing a subject he had in vain sought a private interview with Erina to divulge.

This ball was given by the officers of Chan-

denagore, to compliment a new governor on his arrival at the settlement.

The Count de l'Armencour had secretly been the suggestor, and was to be the conductor of an entertainment which he had planned for the express purpose of carrying conveniently into execution a plot to get Erina into his power. He had woven his toils with such minute filaments and intricacy, that it was like a spider's fine-spun web, which, unperceived, envelopes in destruction its struggling prey, to be devoured at leisure by the venemous reptile that has spread the snare. The devoted victim, unsuspicious of the hidden danger, placed with insidious art in some inviting situation where the garden's sweets abound, sports gaily in the glittering sun-beam, midst ripened fruits and freshest blooming flowers, when suddenly entrapped in the web, too late discovered, the captive's struggles to regain lost liberty involve it in inevitable difficulties; for one fragile thread yields only to succeeding fetters, entangling the fluttering victim in a coiling chain. Thus de l'Armencour's plot was formed by various wheels, which were to be set in motion by the different springs of human passions. His fortune enabled him to bribe agents to effect his plan, and his rank

in society and in the army, induced some, and compelled others, to assist his purposes.

The long preparations requisite for his undertaking had sufficient time to mature, and he entertained the most sanguine hopes of succeeding in his nefarious designs against Erina's peace, and even her honour and her life, if, when in his power, she disputed his desires. Eager for the moment of united revenge and triumph, the count longed equally with the prince for the arrival of the important night fixed for the entertainment; whilst Erina anticipated with pleasure much enjoyment from the promised novel and splendid scene.

Whilst de l'Armencour was busily engaged in arranging his wicked contrivances to get the object of his desires into his possession for the most horrid purposes, she, with the rest of the company, invited to the festivity, was occupied in inventing dresses for Rosaline and herself to appear in the evening of the entertainment. The preparations for disguise were kept a profound secret in each family, to prevent the mutual recognition of intimate acquaintance, and give full effect to the motley assembly. As the invitation to it was by a

card to each guest by name, and of course supposed to be select, it was particularly requested that every person would assume a character. The gay de Briançon insisted on Erina personating a queen, because she was formed, he said, to command all men, offering to attend her as page, whilst Rosaline waited on her as a confidant or lady of her court. To humour their beau, Rosaline and Erina consented to his proposal, and the trio equipped themselves with splendid habits, suitable to the several characters. As Erina objected to assume the royal robes of England or France, lest in her pronunciation of English or French she should be immediately recognised by speaking the first language as a native of Britain, and the French tongue as a foreigner, and thus discover herself to all her acquaintance at Chandenagore as soon as she addressed any of them, and as she rightly judged it absurd to personate a character without speaking in its appropriate language, she said she could only wear the Persian diadem with any propriety, as her late studies enabled her to converse a little in Persian.

In her dress for the occason, all the elegance of fancy could devise most tasteful was employed to deck a figure exquisitely beautiful in a habit superlatively becoming. With delight and gaiety Ro-

saline assumed her character of lady in waiting on her majesty, even before she appeared at the masquerade, and assisting in attiring her friend, decorated her in all her jewels.

The preparations for the festive scene afforded the little party at the villa much entertainment. Rosaline, as usual, was charmingly sportive; and de Briançon rattled away with all his vivacity, telling his two companions he must expend all his volubility for that evening, before he repaired to the assembly, where, out of respect to her majesty, and also by reason of his entire ignorance of the Persian language, he should be compelled to keep silence. Erina, much amused by the cheerful bustle, felt herself particularly exhilarated; her spirits, ever light as innocence, health, and youth could render them, were on this evening elevated above their usual height. Hope and expectation of approaching delight fluttered in her heart, glowed in her cheeks, and sparkled in her eyes; and as she looked forward to the gay scene she was preparing to enter, she experienced a lively sensation of delight at the idea which had before frequently occurred to her, that the prince would certainly recognise her as his pupil in the character she assumed. She also felt a pleasure in believing he would attend her at the ball. She was assured

she should immediately discover him under whatever disguise he appeared, as his superior elegance could not fail to distinguish him and point him out to her observation; and rejoicing in the idea of enjoying his peculiarly charming and interesting conversation for the whole of the entertainment, she flattered herself she might for that night escape the impertinent obtrusion, the teazing attention, and the tormenting assiduities of the troublesome count: for Erina imagined his self-sufficiency must betray him as the most conceited coxcomb existing; and she resolved to guard with particular care against his knowing her.

Indulging such flattering hopes, such pleasing expectations, she assumed her mask, and repaired to the festive scene, more elated than she had ever been by the anticipation of public amusement.

The master of the ceremonies appointed to regulate the festivities of that night, according to the arrangement which had been made, received the company; each individual being announced aloud on entering, under the title of their assumed character.

Erina, pompously introduced as the queen of Persia, with her attendants, received the homage

paid to royalty with all the dignity of gracious sovereignty. Her air was naturally so majestic, and her usual manners so nobly elegant, that it was easy for her to keep up the grandeur her assumed state required.

Being conducted to a seat amongst the female guests, she amused herself with Rosaline in remarking all the company as each character entered and mingled in the motley groups around her. The astonishing variety of the dresses, some splendid in the extreme, others grotesque—the strange mixture of the different characters, some of whom were superb, imposing, and even terrific, while others appeared in direct opposition, as of the lowest classes, ludicrous, and some most engaging; the brilliant decorations of the apartments, where innumerable lights and rich furniture were reflected in magnificent mirrors, that seemed to enlarge the spacious apartments, increase the multitude, and add splendour to the illuminations; and, above all, the music which enlivened all, and spread a kind of magical effect over the scene, conspired to enchant the gay Erina.

The conductors of the entertainment had requested the company to assemble at an early hour, as soon as the evening was sufficiently dusk to

prevent their being mutually recognised by their equipages in their way to the masquerade; the display of character was to continue till midnight, at which hour the guests were to unmask for supper, and at the conclusion of it commence dancing.

As the entertainment was intended to be uncommonly splendid, every one had made a point of exerting all their taste and talents, to add their full share to the expected enjoyment; and many had put themselves to astonishing trouble and expence to contribute to the brilliancy of the scene by curious inventions and magnificent preparations.

In addition to all the crowned heads of the globe, many of the heathen deities were personated with extraordinary ability, and an amazing grand and striking effect. Here were seen the Grand Signior, surrrounded by the ladies of his seraglio; the Great Mogul, with a train of tributary nabobs and rajahs; a Jupiter brandishing his thunder-bolts, pleased, instead of alarming the assembly; Fortune, mounted on her wheel, attracted a crowd of supplicants round her, who, scrambling eagerly for the counterfeit favours her blind goddesship distributed, acted the pantomime of real life in rudely jostling each other, and often injuring themselves in striving for that which, when obtained with difficulty, and

grasped with anxiety, was neither worth the trouble of preserving, nor the pain and risk of acquiring. Erina, who ever loved to draw a moral lesson from each circumstance, remarked to Rosaline this observation on Fortune and her votaries. The two friends and de Briançon were highly entertained by recognising the ugliest woman in Chandenagore under the disguise of a Venus, surrounded by Loves and attended by Cupid. "This is a striking proof of female unfounded pretension and vanity," cried the lively viscount in a half whisper to his two companions. "Or rather perhaps of that gross and often ill-natured flattery," added Erina laughing, "which your sex, Monsieur de Briançon, believe themselves at liberty to employ, in order to render our's weak enough to believe their lovers' vows. It is, however, surely cruel to laugh at follies of which they are the cause. Let not men condemn the vanity of women till beaux cease to flatter."

Whilst Erina was busily engaged examining all the motley throng around her, in hopes of discovering her interesting friend, the Prince of Azimabad, her attention was directed towards the entrance into the ball-room, on hearing the guardian genius of virtue announced. In the expectation of recognising under that appellation the illustrious youth, who on a former occasion had gallantly

claimed the title of her attendant spirit, Erina fixed an enquiring gaze of admiration on an advancing pageant. On a triumphal car, glittering with burnished gold, and enriched with precious stones, stood a fine commanding figure, clad in the most sumptuous apparel. The car, formed as the pencil of taste would depict the chariot of the sun, was raised on wheels of ivory, braced with gold; perched on the axletree in front of the bronze effigy of an enormous eagle, with expanding flapping wings, appeared to move the car, which the youth placed in it, guided by secret mechanism. Radiant in silver, gold, and jewels, reflected light, in brilliant coruscations, flashed from his sparkling vestments as he passed through the crowd, in sumptuous pomp, outshining by his lustre all that seemed splendid, until his effulgence dazzled.

In his commanding stature, and pre-eminently graceful air of princely dignity, Erina's admiration recognized her illustrious friend Jaffier Mahomed. The throng pressed round his beaming car, soliciting his guardian care; whilst he, immediately distinguishing Erina by her peculiarly elegant dress and graceful air, sprung from his elevated station, and, with an airy bound, advancing to her, presented a golden casket, telling her it contained a talisman,

which, if she would accept and wear, would attach him most faithfully for ever to her service. This offered gift, which could not be refused without affectation and incivility, Erina received with a characteristic acknowledgment to her good genius.

Without a mutual declaration of reciprocal recognition, each felt perfectly convinced of being known by the other. Their conversation, quite adapted to the characters both had assumed, was particularly elegant, spirited, sentimental, and interesting. Congeniality of taste, and a striking similarity of disposition and talents, afforded each the means of shining in intercourse with the other, and drawing forth that reciprocation of thought and feeling which constitute sympathy, that to minds of sensibility is the most delightful of all sensations.

In an enchanting intercommunication of ideas and sentiments, the prince and Erina were engaged when they were accosted by a mask, who had been announced under the title of Abucazan, the magician. Bearing all the insignia of necromancy, he boasted the power of his art; and offering his services to Erina, he assured her he knew all the events of her past life, and foresaw every thing that would happen in the course of her future days;

and related to her so exactly all the striking occurrences which had befallen her, as to astonish her. She in vain endeavoured to recollect this extraordinary personage, whose conversation so accorded with the abstract idea of a magician, conceived in the perusal of a fairy tale, that a superstitious mind might almost have believed him a sorcerer.

With equal ability the prince sustained his character as the attendant spirit of Erina, and she was highly entertained with the conversation between her guardian genius and the necromancer; when she was addressed by a mask who had just been introduced to the assembly under the title of the invincible knight of the golden armour.

On approaching Erina, he bowed obsequiously, and telling her he was the champion of her peerless beauty, she instantly recognised in the tones of his voice, in his air, and in his features, imperfectly concealed by the visor of his helmet, the Count de l'Armencour.

Started as she was by the pointed manner of his addressing her, which seemed to indicate he knew her, she yet flattered herself it was impossible he could thus instantly have discovered her,

and even before she had spoken a syllable in his hearing: resolved, if possible, to avoid being recognized by him, and thus escape his persecuting assiduities for that night, she acknowledged the knight's courteous homage only by a silent inclination of her head; and, to her unspeakable satisfaction, saw him immediately take his leave, and mingle in the crowd.

Amongst those who most entertained the company, the magician was pre-eminent. Invited to behold the power of his art, a throng gathered round him at one end of the apartment, where a canopy had been spread. Here he began his solicited and promised incantations. Having marked the floor in a circle round him with his wand, which was made of ebony, and tipped with fire, he desired no one might approach within the ring he had drawn, under the pain of transformation to the shape of some horrid monster. Upon this speech, a mask, in the form of a devil, leaped within the line which the magician had traced, and defied his power, though it were derived from Satan himself.

"The arch fiend dreads the effect of my magic," cried the necromancer, with a tremendous voice—"he dares not oppose it—who then will venture to

dispute the power of Abucazan, when he can command the infernal spirits to obey him and appear at his summons?

"As for thee," continued the sorcerer, in a contemptuous strain, seizing the mask that had addressed him, "thou art almost too despicable a subject for the display of my art; by it I see through the disguise of a devil, which suits thee well, and shews thy judgment in assuming a character thou art fitted to support, because thou hast often played it, that thou art an officer in the French service." A general burst of laughter applauded the sarcasm of the magician, who thus continued: "To strip off thy disguise, *Monsieur de Captaine*, and shew thee in thy real form, would be too trivial an effort for my sorcery; but by a touch of my wand I will transform thy demonship into a figure equally characteristic of thy true self. In thy professional capacity, the sword affords thee triumph and glory; in a perpetual change of place thou passest thy time in amusement, and by the flattery of the fair sex, leadest them to forsake their friends and follow thee wherever fortune throws thee. Ever employed in deceiving, whether in the martial character, or in that of a devil, retain thy nature under a different shape. Be

henceforth still thyself, but change thy name from soldier and demon to harlequin!"

Thus saying, the magician waved his hand over she devil's head, and touching his sooty apparel with the blazing point of the ebon rod, a blue lambent flame consumed in a moment the sable gauze in which the demon had been enveloped, and discovered the party-coloured vesture of a harlequin.

At this unexpected transformation a general buz of applause complimented the sorcerer; who, continuing to brandish his wand, muttered, in a hollow voice, a few unintelligible syllables, when suddenly, from the spreading canopy under which he stood, as in a tent, a radiant female figure descended in transparent clouds of white and purple, illumined with effulgent light. In her hand she held a torch, which she presented to the magician with a smile, and ascended to the sound of a soft symphany, which seemed like the music of enchantment. To its dulcet notes, the hitherto inanimate harlequin moved, as if just awaking from a trance, while the torch waved over him. As the sweet strains changed from a slow movement to a sprightly air, the newly animated harlequin

began his frolicsome motions; when the magician, drawing a sword from his robes, gave it to the transformed mask, desired him to seek a columbine amongst the guests, and entertain the assembly with his gambols; upon which the new harlequin, darting amidst the throng, left the sorcerer to proceed in his magical operations.

"Who dares now defy my power?" demanded he, in a solemn voice, gazing round the semicircle of company which had gathered in a crowd at a little distance from the station he had taken.

"I dare!" cried the prince. "The guardian genius of virtue will boldly brave the power of the magician Abucazan."

"Wilt thou pretend to contend with him before whom all spirits tremble? Consider thy temerity, whilst I anew display my art in all its terrors." Uttering these words, he traced with his wand, in large characters, the word "Satan," upon the floor, in letters black as jet. Then taking a phial out of his bosom, he sprinkled the ground with large drops of a sanguine colour. As he performed this muttering, a noise was heard like the grumbling of distant thunder, which increased till it came to an incessant roar of dreadful peals, that broke in tremendous claps above him, while

streams of livid light burst from the drapery over his head. Standing unmoved for some moments, as if uttering incantations over a large vase, he placed it on the letters he had traced on the floor, and setting it into combustion with the flaming torch, he withdrew from the burning vase, while thick fumes ascending from it spread in a vapour round; and from the yawning ground issued, in the midst of blue flashes of fiery light, and curling smoke, a gigantic figure, such as Milton's pen, of immortal fame, drew the rebel demon Lucifer. So dark, so tremendously great he stood, staring with a satanic frown on all around, while from the red glare of infuriated eyes, and the flames in which the enormous figure was enveloped, ensanguined rays beamed from the dreadful apparition.

The assembly, hushed to perfect silence, gazed on the scene displayed with art so deceptive, as almost to stagger resolution into an idea of real danger; and to lessening peals, like retiring thunder, the terrific figure vanished in smoke, which soon dispersing, nought but empty space left.

"Who will venture to dispute my power?" cried the magician, advancing to the verge of his circle. "Within this magic round," he added, smiling on Erina, "female beauty and innocence are

ever safe. The lovely possessor of Persia's throne alone can command the magician Abucazan: say then, royal lady, what you yet desire besides the richest gifts of person, mind, and fortune, all already your's. Would you, before the feast to which these numerous guests are bid, regale yourself with viands, such as an enchanted banquet can afford? If such your wish, fair queen, inform me of it by a royal nod of smiling condescension."

Erina laughed at this address, and bowed, to carry on the illusive jest of the entertaining scene.

Immediately at the stroke of the magician's wand, a table rose within the circle under the canopy; upon the board, fruits, and goblets wreathed with flowers, displayed the appearance of a fairy feast. A chair of royal state next rose, at the command of the sorcerer; who, advancing towards Erina, offered his hand to conduct her to her seat at the table; when just as she was about to approach the table, harlequin, accompanied by columbine, tripped to it; and the latter, seating herself on the chair, began to feast on the tempting fruit with her nimble attendant.

After those unexpected intruders hobbled pantaloon, followed by his clown, in search of the fugi-

tive couple, who were surprisingly enchanted away by the chair, with columbine in it, and harlequin standing behind it, being wheeled out of the apartment in the manner of turning boxes, which are frequent in convents.

The runaway lovers having thus disappeared, old pantaloon and the clown, as might be expected, were going to partake of the banquet, when it suddenly sunk, to the extreme entertainment of the assembly.

The magician, however, instantly conjured up the table again; and once more solicited Erina to taste of the viands prepared for her.

The Prince of Azimabad, highly amused by the clever display of so much tasteful machinery, was intent on following Erina, to examine it nearer than the circle allowed any one to approach; but the magician, keeping up all the solemnity consistent with his character, interdicted every one, on the peril of their life, to pass the line he had drawn with his wand, adding, that the favoured queen of Persia was alone permitted to tread with impunity on the magic ground, which the sorcery of her obedient and devoted necromancer had enchanted.

Pleased with the well-imagined scene, and inspired by gaiety to bear a part in the little fanciful drama that had been so successfully displayed, Erina permitted herself to be handed to the banquet, and taking her seat at the table under the canopy, listened with pleasure to the soft melody of a distant symphony, which again swelled on her ear in full chords of delightful harmony. To these strains of enchanting music, the radiant figure that before appeared, descended midst illumined clouds, and sweetly smiling, crowned Erina with a wreath of roses, whilst the magician closed the curtains which hung in drapery round the canopy.

The concert continued to play in varied movements, and the light under the canopy illuminating the pink drapery pendant from it, threw a rose-tinctured soft radiance round, whilst the admiring spectators waited in pleasing expectation of seeing the scene unclose with increased splendour and some surprising novelty.

With more impatience than the rest of the company, the three attendants of Erina waited her re-appearance, until weary of delay, the prince, stepping within the circle, approached the canopy, and drawing aside the curtain, beheld nothing but the radiant clouds which illumined the scene.

The banquet and chair of state, the conductor of the deceptive drama, and the figure that had crowned Erina had disappeared with her, as if all had vanished by real enchantment.

A mixed sensation of surprise, disappointment, and alarm, disturbed the minds of Rosaline, de Briançon, and the prince, whilst several of the company assured them the second act of the pantomimic drama would open with more astonishing effects than had yet been seen; but some time passed in suspense, increasing from uneasiness to tormenting anxiety, and from tormenting anxiety to the most agonizing perplexity and dismay at Erina's extraordinary absence.

Dreadful as this state of terror was, it equalled not that Erina experienced, when from the illusive brillant banquet, and the sound of soft harmony, she suddenly dropped into a deep and dark abyss, and total stillness, only interrupted by a voice that desired her not to fear.

Suspended, according to her apprehension, in a situation of extreme danger, she felt her senses bewildered in a maze of frightful conjectures relative to the event which had placed her in her horrid position. Breathless and trembling, she

remained silent and motionless, waiting with a painfully palpitating heart the elucidation of her mysterious situation, when the darkness was dimly lighted by an approaching torch. As its red glare spread round the place, Erina perceived it was an immense deep dungeon, into which she had been let down by a large trap-door. The table was still before her, and on turning her head to take a view of the gloomy scene around her, she found herself in the grasp of the figure, whose necromantic appearance inspired her now with a species of awe, even more terrific than that which ignorance feels from superstitious horrors.

"Fear nothing," cried the strange unknown, as Erina supplicated to be restored to her friends in the assembly,—"fear nothing, and trust to my conducting you thither; in perfect safety I will soon lead you to your friends, if you follow a way which I shall hasten to shew you from these vaults to the ball-room."

Saying this, he offered his hand to the trembling girl, who, anxious to be released from the dismal place to the bright scene she had left, permitted her conductor to lead her out of the dungeon. Through a long dreary passage, he handed her for-

ward in silence, following the torch-bearer, who was masked.

Erina felt an indescribable fear, such as timidity experiences in a place that inspires apprehensions of concealed difficulties and danger. She was proceeding she knew not whither with guides unknown. The sudden surprise occasioned by the most unexpected transition from a gaily splendid and festive scene to the dreary subterranean dungeon, had checked the flow of her uncommonly exhilarated spirits, and the chill which struck from the dripping vapour-encrusted walls, within whose dark enclosure she wandered pensive and uncertain of her way, made a cold nervous tremor creep through her frame in sickening sensations of faintness, that increased at every step, and nearly over-powered her.

After proceeding a considerable way through an arched narrow passage, that appeared interminable to Erina's impatience, she saw the torch-bearer open a huge door, which he held open for her passage. Unsuspicious as she was of any real danger awaiting her, she shuddered as she approached what appeared to her lively fancy an entrance into the prison of an enchanted castle. Amongst

the numerous books Erina had read, she had occasionally perused a romance or novel, if recommended to her as a production of genius and morality; for notwithstanding her taste for serious reading, she was not above admiring and feeling interested in a well-told fictitious tale, where sentiment was awakened, and where the heart was so affected as to receive a strong impression from supposed characters well delineated, and imaginary scenes judiciously displayed by fancy's pen as moral lessons. She had perused many works of that kind, in which sound sense was conveyed in the most useful maxims, where true religion was pourtrayed in the most sublime descriptions, where piety was inculcated by the most engaging examples, and where amusement was blended with so much instruction and real knowledge of the world, as to render romance the vehicle of exalted ideas, refined sentiment, and superior wisdom and virtue.

Equally extraordinary as the incidents of any ancient fairy tale appeared those of this evening, and equally terrible as the most highly coloured scene in any modern novel appeared, the situation of the alarmed Erina, when, having passed the tremendous looking-door, she heard it locked and barred with massy bolts, and saw herself enclosed in a vault, to which that barricadoed door was the

only entrance, and where, to her amazement and unutterable horror, she felt herself in the insolent grasp of the detestable de l'Armencour.

"Release me, count!" she cried, after a shriek of surprise and terror, on being rudely seized by him as she entered the vault. "Release me, Sir!" she repeated, struggling to disengage herself from his encircling arms.

"Never, by Heaven!" ejaculated de l'Armencour. "Erina, you are in my power, and I swear never to release you till you are irrevocably mine. Mine," he repeated with vehemence, "by all the laws which men consider most binding, as divine and human."

"Unhand me, and explain this outrage!" said Erina in a commanding tone, tearing off her mask, and frowning indignantly with a strong expression of insulted dignity.

"Frown not!" cried de l'Armencour, while still grasping his victim in one arm, he lifted the visor of his helmet, and smiling maliciously, thus continued: "Insult not, Erina, the man from whose power nothing can release you—no longer the obsequious lover I lately professed myself, behold in

me now a commanding master—to sue tamely for your favour is beneath the dignity of the proud Count de l'Armencour; he *demands* obedience instead of *interceding* for compliance. Nothing can evade the measures I have taken to secure you for ever, past all opposition, for myself. This is no time nor place to talk of the passion which has instigated me to adopt a plan impossible to be counteracted. Listen, Erina, calmly to the purpose I am about to unfold—consider your situation, which you will learn from my explanation, and resolve to submit to circumstances, against which all your struggles will be vain.

"Conveyed by my minions to these secret subterranean vaults, that are guarded against all intrusion by myrmidons whom my rank, my fortune, and their dependance and poverty bind faithfully to my will and service, you can have neither retreat nor liberty, except on certain conditions that you must fulfil.

"To be either my wife or mistress, is the only choice I allow you."

"I will rather die!" exclaimed Erina, with frantic indignation; while a contemptuous smile

marked the features of the count with an expression of villainy truly diabolical.

"Rave not thus!" he coolly resumed, "to die is neither within your choice nor power, while mine is, that you live for me. A priest now waits with proper witnesses to solemnize our marriage rites; to which if you consent, and vow solemnly to keep this transaction secret, an instant restoration to your friends will follow. Buried in eternal concealment, this act clandestinely ensures you to me, whilst to shield your fame I will openly propose our public nuptials. If you agree to this without demur, and fulfil your vows to me, and oath of secrecy respecting all that passes in these vaults, your reputation shall remain unblemished; if, on the contrary, you brave my power, and resist me either at present, or deceive me hereafter, not only your character but life shall pay the forfeit; for a hundred daggers point threatening at your bosom by the command of my infuriate passion—that passion, my divinity, I alone obey; defying heaven and earth, denying Providence, and despising the power of men and dæmons."

Thunderstruck, Erina stood gasping for breath, with agonizing terror. Almost frenzied in the be-

wildered confusion of her distracted thoughts, she clasped her hands, with an expression of sudden mania in her face and gestures. No tear softened the wild glances of her eyes—no sigh relieved the tumultuous sensations of her convulsed bosom—mute with horror, she stood the picture of despairing melancholy, while de l'Armencour pressed her to his breast. Roused by his freedom to resent it, Erina repulsed the presumptuous count from her with an action so spirited, as to awe him from licentious liberties; and summoning all her reflection and presence of mind to her aid, she said, in a low, yet commanding tone of voice, that marked determination, "lead me to the altar."

Elated by those words which promised him immediate certainty of speedy triumph, de l'Armencour again seized the passive hand of Erina; and, desiring the obedient torch-bearer, and the silent mask in the magician's habit, to unclose the strong barred door, he led forth his helpless victim to the spot prepared for her dreadful sacrifice; whilst she, with beating heart, and trembling steps, walked to the place she considered consecrated by an altar, though raised for the purpose of embittering all her earthly existence.

In a vault adjoining that she had just quitted,

glimmered some tapers round a table, on which was placed a crucifix, with the sacred volumes of the catholic religious ceremonies. On each side of this temporary altar stood a man in sacerdotal vestments, who bowed at the approach of the count, and at his command took up the books of ritual, to commence the awful nuptial rites, whilst advancing with Erina to take his station for the solemnity, he was followed by his two masked attendants. As she gazed on her diabolical seducers to this scene of her misery and destruction, she shuddered with dismay and horror——an icy chill crept through her veins, and made her sick at heart, and her trembling limbs almost refused the office of supporting her. On the features of de l'Armencour, sat a smile of triumph, such as the infernal spirit himself might be supposed to wear, when he had lured to perdition the beauteous mother of mankind; and, with despair like her's at the loss of Eden, Erina lamented the deprivation of liberty. Her native land, her paternal home, a re-union with her relatives and friends, appeared to her like a lost paradise, guarded for ever against her entrance, by an angel with the flaming sword; for how could she ever again bear to face the light of heaven, or shew herself amongst her friends, after being in the power of a wretch devoid of every principle?

Bereaved of all earthly assistance and comfort, heaven yet remained to her——she fixed an eye upon the altar, consecrated by the hallowed image of him, who sacrificed himself to save the world; and, trusting to obtain by prayer, the aid of angels when human succour failed, Erina, wrapped in devotion, prostrated herself before the altar on her knees, and bowing her head, she crossed her hands upon her agitated bosom.

De l'Armencour also dared to kneel, and the marriage rites were about to be pronounced, when Erina, raising her eyes and clasped hands towards heaven, called it and all its ministers on earth, to witness the vow she uttered at the altar, that she would never unite herself to her villainous and atheistical seducer.

"Never!" cried Erina, rising from her knees, and with an action and tone of voice, that evinced the calm settled resolution of a soul, great and heroically firm. "Never," she repeated with dignified emphasis, "will I consent to my degradation—no human power can have any over my mind, to force me to yield it subservient to wicked purposes. I will not mock heaven with impious vows—I will never bind myself to infamy—I will not desert myself, and give myself

tamely into the possession of a villain; but, in every extremity remain free to point him to the scorn of the world, and at liberty to despise him as a seducer, instead of obeying him as my husband!"

"Do you brave me thus?" demanded the enraged and disappointed count. "Do you thus provoke the man who has the power to humble your proud spirit by making you his, without the forms which will save you from the world's contempt?"

"I should, indeed," she replied with calm collected dignity of soul, of look and gesture, "deserve the world's contempt, and merit even more my own, were I to become the wife of the wretch I execrate and despise. Whatever I may lose of the world's respect, I will not forfeit my own esteem by such a desertion of my principles; but retain my freedom, and that to make the laws you infringe chastise your insolence, and redress my wrongs. Think not I approached the altar to submit to assume the chains of ignominy—no—I sought this fane, hallowed by the sacred ensign of the cross, to swear before it allegiance to heaven, not to a monster who braves its laws, and denies a Providence. I came before those

invested with the sacerdotal habit, not to take, but reject and spurn the fetters in which you would bind my free soul. My spirit mocks at human power, and trusting in that All-mighty Being, whose sure vengeance your impious words and deeds provoke, I rest my confidence in angels' care."

A malignant grin of infuriated spite, distorted the countenance of de l'Armencour, as Erina's words, like a dagger pierced his soul, wounding deeply each wicked passion of his fiend-like nature. All its malevolence glared in his eyes, and turned his contemptuous smiles to horrible contortions, whilst he thus addressed the victim he oppressed. "'Tis past, Erina, you have signed your doom—my love has turned to direful hatred, and your honour and fame shall pay an atonement for the insults of your speech." Then turning to his two masked attendants, and to his two other creatures, whom he had bribed to personate priests in order to impose upon Erina a mock ceremony, which she would have considered binding, he desired them to bear her to the place of secret imprisonment he had prepared for her confinement. "There," continued he, addressing the almost fainting girl, "you will, under a strict guard, learn to fear the power you now

affect to despise; and when you have in vain invoked your *guardian genius,*" he added, with a sarcastic sneer, " to come to your assistance, the tongue of public scandal shall tell the crowd of your admirers, that you rejected their adulation to become the mistress of the seductive de l'Armencour, who was too proud to unite himself to the beauteous Erina in marriage. This thy strict principles of truth and honour must forbid thee to deny; for to be my mistress is thy voluntary choice, and I refuse to form those matrimonial bonds, by which I might restore thee to the consideration of a world, that henceforth will shun thee. That justice to which you would appeal to redress your wrongs, will not believe your tale that my asseverations will refute; and wanting proof to substantiate any charge against me, will fail to criminate me, since the agents of my scheme are bribed to eternal secresy by self-interest, not to disclose the plot in which they are more guilty than myself; and that same self-interest made, and will ever retain them faithful to perform the services, which I purchase by the double means of promises and threats of gains and forfeits.

As for your late protector de Briançon, he would feel ashamed to offer himself the cham-

pion of a woman lost to virtue. Such you will be believed, for my plans are too deep-laid to be ever brought to light, and the contrivances by which I got you into my power, will easily be credited by the public, ever eager to calumniate an object of universal celebrity, to have been a device preconcerted between us, for your evasion from your friends. Should the viscount be prevailed on by Lady Kinross to disbelieve report, and try to avenge the cause of her friend, I have the means effectually to ruin the man, that would dare insult his superior in rank. Learn then, obstinate girl, to tremble at the power of him, who will never be offended without revenging it! Bear her hence!" he cried to his myrmidons, "away with her to perpetual confinement, by the secret road that leads to my house."

Thus saying, he unsheathed his sword, and sternly pointing it to the direction of the way, he desired the torch-bearer to advance, and followed behind the fainting victim of his enraged passions, to the scene where, he felt assured, nothing could oppose their gratification.

Erina, unable to resist the ruffians, was borne

between them through the long dismal passage which had led her to the vaults; where the profound stillness that reigned around, too well convinced her she was far removed from human hearing, and that her loudest shrieks for aid, could bring no mortal to her rescue: silenced therefore by despair, she suffered herself to be carried along, convinced it was impossible she could be conveyed to a place more dangerous, or more horrid than her present situation. Having through subterraneous windings passed a considerable length of way, her conductors brought her to the bottom of a narrow flight of steps of amazing height and steepness, which she was desired to ascend. The torch-bearer here, as before, led the way, whilst her conductors assisted her to mount the uneven steps of difficult ascent, and de l'Armencour, with his sword unsheathed, continued to urge her forward.

The desire of release from the secret dungeons, excavated in subterranean labyrinths, secured against human visitation, was sufficient to impel Erina up steps, which it was impossible to mount without considerable effort. The exertion requisite for this, added to the racking tortures of her mind; almost overpowered her; and, on reaching the summit of the stairs, she was near

fainting, when the opening of a door, that admitted fresh air, revived her sinking frame, and gave her strength and renovated spirits.

Erina gladly sprung forward to the open door, which she perceived to be an egress from the place where her terrors had been shocking beyond description. She recollected at this moment her release from the convent, whence she had lost all hopes of liberation. The remembrance of her rescue out of the power of her persecutors, when she had most reason to dread their oppressions must have effected her ruin inevitably, gave such a lively emotion to her grateful heart, as to make her feel most forcibly the duty of relying, with implicit confidence, on the protection of Providence; believing most firmly, that *the Great Creator of the universe, extends his care to all who solicit it with pious trust.*

CHAP. II.

"Amidst the most violent bursts of woe for irremediable misfortunes, the pious mind seeks and finds consolation in religion: at whose cheering whispers the soul is soothed to peace, even in the most direful calamities; and the maniac melancholy of affliction, turns from frantic grief and wild despair, to meek submission and placid suffering."

THROUGH the door at the top of the steps, which Erina had mounted, she passed into a kind of court, enclosed within high walls, where the count's palanquin had been ordered to remain in waiting.

The unhappy victim of his diabolical plot was now forced into this enclosed chair; the blinds of which had previously been so secured, as to prevent the possibility of the wretched prisoner summoning any one to her rescue as she was carried to the place prepared for her confinement, in case she refused to bind herself by private vows,

to allow the count the triumph he desired, in immediately obtaining her publicly.

Every possible occurrence that could frustrate the scheme, had been foreseen and guarded against so carefully, that the interference of Providence, by an apparent miraculous interposition, could alone save Erina from the destruction that de l'Armencour had planned.

Shut into the palanquin, she heard him order it to be carried by the private road to his house; and, finding the chair in motion, whilst she heard a gate opened for its passage, she was distracted by the most dreadful anticipations, when she heard a loud command for the bearers of the palanquin to halt.

Amidst a confusion of voices in violent altercation, and the scuffle of a number of people, Erina found her chair arrested, and the door of it opened immediately, on her earnest supplication to be liberated.

Taking the first possible moment to regain her freedom, by an instantaneous spring she started from the vehicle, in which she had forcibly been confined; and, darting through a number of at-

tendants, and a gathering crowd, she caught a glimpse of the Prince of Azimabad. By the light of innumerable torches, which are always carried before equipages at night in India, he was distinguished from a distance by his glittering habit, and still more by his superior figure and commanding mein.

The instant Erina saw her deliverer, an involuntary impulse urged her through the throng with incredible speed, towards her gallant protector and illustrious friend, and prompted her to precipitate herself into his sheltering arms; which, flying to her, he extended to receive the maid of his idolatry. "Fear nothing, beauteous lady," he cried—"The bosom of Jaffier Mahomed is thy shield, and must be pierced by mortal stabs, ere any harm or insult reach thy lovely innocence."

Restored to confidence by the presence of the prince, and his assurance of that protection, in which of all mortal aid she had most dependance of safety, she seized his hand, and with a strong emotion of gratitude, she pressed it to her palpitating bosom, ejaculating, "you are indeed my guardian angel, sent by heaven to rescue me from utter ruin.

While she spoke, a shower of tears relieved her fluttering heart, almost convulsed by the struggling and powerful agitation of her mind; where sudden joy by an astonishing surprize, had caused an instantaneous transition, from the utmost terror and most dire despair, to perfect confidence and felicity. After the first burst of violent emotion, which had bedewed the heightened glow of Erina's blooming cheeks, with tears that stood empearled, a smile dimpled round her roseat lips, and sparkled from her humid beaming eyes, whilst from their long silken lashes some glittering drops hung pendant like those, which after a stormy shower, shine lustrous to the gay sun-beams, that, breaking from dispersing clouds, shew the brilliant æther, and glitter on rain-bespangled roses refreshed to heightened bloom, by the sprinkling shower and brightening sun-shine.

The prince, transported to more than mortal joy, at this recovery of the maid he idolized, bowed on her trembling hand with all an ardent and respectful lover's admiration; then encircling her with one arm, to support her with the chastest delicacy, and leading her with his other hand, he directed her towards the great entrance portal of the edifice, where the entertainment had assem-

bled all her friends, anticipating with delight the mutual joy of Lady Kinross, and the lovely girl at their re-union. As he was thus with assiduous care conducting the rescued Erina to her anxious protectors, her detestable ravisher, infuriated by the loss of a prey, he had believed securely his, rushed from amidst the encircling crowd; and, darting towards the prince with unsheathed sword, aimed at his breast a thrust, which would have proved instantly fatal, had not the attendant guards assembled round him, parried with their arms the vengeful stroke.

Innumerable Seapoys and other Asiatics, accoutred with various weapons of defence, sprung forward, and seizing the count disguised in his armour, as he had appeared at the masquerade, pointed their bayonets, scymitars, and daggers at him; and would unmercifully have mangled and torn him in pieces as a desperate assassin, had not the prince commanded the guards to spare their prisoner.

Erina, who had uttered a piercing shriek at a scene which revived all the horrors she had suffered, with an addition of terror at seeing the Prince's life endangered by his rescue of her, fainted in his arms, when a great crowd of masks,

amongst whom were de Briançon and Rosaline, alarmed at the extraordinary bustle at the portal of the assembly-rooms, rushed out; and, learning the cause of the confusion, immediately gathered round the fainting Erina. To conceive what passed in this scene of general tumult is easier than to describe it.

The preservation of the surprisingly stolen and rescued lady, was the first and greatest care expressed and attended to. The seizure, detention, and examination of the yet unknown culprit was the next great concern. And to admire and thank the gallant champion of insulted beauty and innocence, was an equally important consideration.

The bright blaze of innumerable torches lighted this extraordinary and highly interesting scene: and as the pure air of a fine serene atmosphere was judged fitter to restore Erina from her swoon, her friends were not desirous of removing her into the apartments of the house, heated by the lights, and a concourse of company.

As soon as the prince saw his charge safe, under the care of Rosaline, he seized the opportunity of gratifying his desire to chastise publicly, as he merited, the villain who had been so base as to in-

sult the virtue of Erina. Leaving her and Lady Kinross under the protection of the viscount, Jaffier Mahomed walked across the circle, formed by the surrounding throng, to the guards who retained in custody the still disguised, and now disarmed, and pinioned Count de l'Armencour.

Stung to the soul with the disappointment of losing his prey, racked with indescribable tortures at the apprehension of public discovery and general exposure to the shafts of justice, the taunts of derision, and universal contempt, and bursting with rage, and malice at being thus frustrated, exposed, and even openly rivalled by one whose nation and rank prevented not only all hopes of chastisement, but even any means of secret vengeance, the count stood suffering all he merited in the torments his wicked passions inflicted; when the Prince, with an air and tone of speech expressive of contempt, restrained from rudeness by a consideration of his own princely dignity, thus addressed the humiliated de l'Armencour.

"Through a disguise assumed for the most illicit purposes, I recognise the Count de l'Armencour; and call upon him publicly to answer for his offence against all laws. I will not avail myself of the power I might obtain to make the sword of

justice avenge herself insulted, innocence offended, and martial honour stained. Mine disdains such vengeance, while my sword impatiently demands the only retribution that can be made to my indignant spirit."

Thus saying, he approached the sullen and enraged count, and releasing him from the grasp of the attendant guards, he politely presented him a sword and the shield, of which he had been disarmed, telling him he never took advantage of an enemy, who was without weapons, or unprepared for defence. Then taking a scymitar and buckler from one of the Moorish officers, called a pion who was in waiting amongst the governor's guards, the Prince of Azimabad, with the true spirit and courtesey of chivalry, called out his antagonist to meet him in combat on the spot.

Erina, now recalled from a state of insensibility by the efforts of Rosaline, and supported by de Briançon, who, with her other friends, feared she would relapse into a second swoon, witnessed the scene, which had all the appearance of an ancient combat; and in which every one present was withheld from interfering, in consideration of the rank of the parties, the determined spirit both evinced, and the desire all felt that the daring

outrage of the count should be punished in an exemplary manner.

The various masks and different dresses of the several orders of Asiatics, each distinguished by a costume peculiar to their offices and casts, the bright light of innumerable torches, borne by a crowd of attendants, whom curiosity had gathered to the place before the portico of the large edifice where the masquerade was held, and which was illuminated for the occasion, with the shining armour of de l'Armencour, and the sumptuous and picturesque eastern habit of the prince, gave the scene all the effect of those displayed in Spain, when the Moors and Christians contended for its dominion.

The count, who was an excellent swordsman, fought with equal violence and dexterity—rage and desperation were marked in his attack—while cool courage and superior ability were displayed in the prince's use of arms, in which exercise he had from boyhood particularly distinguished himself.

To express the grace of his motions and the evident fury of de l'Armencour in the combat, would be as arduous as the description of Erina's emotions and agitation at this sight, equally extraor-

dinary and alarming to her delicate feelings. The contest was not long; for the superior address of the gallant prince soon disarmed his adversary, and laid him prostrate on the earth completely defeated: when the victor, only triumphed by throwing down his weapons, and desiring the count never henceforth to merit chastisement, by insulting virtue and offending beauty, nor provoke honour to avenge its wrongs.

The general applause bestowed on the conduct of the vanquisher, by loud acclamations on his victory, was felt by the humiliated count, as the severest censure that could be passed upon his behaviour.

Each of the combatants had bled in the conflict; and as the unanimous opinion of the public was decidedly expressed in declaring the affair completely terminated, de l'Armencour found it impossible to demand a second trial, as his challenging the victor to another combat, would have increased the hatred and disgrace he was sensible his conduct had drawn upon him. Humbled to the last degree of mortification at the consciousness of becoming an object of public scorn and universal odium, in a place, and at a time that he had been certain of his long anticipated and expected triumph, the count

was led from the scene of his defeat and disgrace with all the feelings of disappointment, rancour, envy, jealousy, and confusion, that his violent and now enfuriated passions could inflict for the deserved torment of wickedness. But he did not leave the scene of his public shame without observing with a malevolent eye, the universal high estimation in which the prince was held; who, receiving, with unaffected modesty, the praise and congratulations of all, shewed himself more elated by the tearful smile of the beauteous Erina, which expressed, in language impossible to be misunderstood, all the agitation, all the joy, and all the gratitude that the highest admiration could feel on such an occasion, for a being most interesting to the tenderest regard.

As the combatants had both bled extremely in the conflict, the company assembled round them, amongst whom were several medical professors, who insisted on the wounds of the prince and the count being searched on the spot. Each were unwilling to submit to this—the first from delicacy, the last through shame. However, as all resolved on pressing the measure, the victor and the vanquished retired into one of the apartments in the place where the assembly was held; and, in a short time the anxious company learned, that although the

count had got several wounds, none of them were mortal, and that the only injury the prince had received, was a slight cut in his arm.

His appearance immediately among the circle surrounding the alarmed and distressed Erina, lessened, in some measure, her extreme anxiety about her gallant protector, deliverer, and champion. To address him under these several characters without an interest amounting to the tenderest sentiments of admiration, gratitude, and affection, would have been impossible for a mind endowed with the keen sensibility that rendered Erina quite an enthusiast. Ever open and sincere in expressing her feelings, none of them were concealed from the prince on the present occasion, when he approached, with the most delicate testimonies of anxious adoration, to enquire after the object of his love, and her fair friend.

The gentle Rosaline, who had suffered almost as much as Erina, both on her account and that of the prince, was equally desirous as the still agitated girl, to retire from the bustle of the present scene of mingled festivity and confusion, to the tranquillity of their home at the peaceful villa: and as soon as the equipage of Lady Kinross could be ordered, she left the assembly with her lovely

friend, who had occasioned so much alarm and interest amongst the numerous company.

The prince, declaring his wound a mere scratch, though the surgeon had put his arm in a sling, and desired him to quit the assembly, and confine himself at home till he gave him permission to venture abroad, would not consent to leave Erina, whilst she waited in the ball-room for the arrival of the carriage. In replies to all her anxiety relative to him, expressed with the most flattering interest, Jaffier Mahomed endeavoured to tranquillize her fluttered spirits by the gaiety of his; which were particularly exhilarated by testimonies of Erina's regard, that the events of the evening had called forth in the strongest manner, and which occasion had displayed in the liveliest and most unequivocal way. On Erina's requesting the prince to go home immediately, and take care of himself, he gaily smiled, and venturing for the first time to seize and press her hand, he said, in a tone of particular softness, "Do not desire me to leave you—the office of being your *guardian genius* binds me to attend you, especially on an occasion that particularly demands my services; I should wish to see you safe to the villa before I return home to-night."—This, in fact, he persisted

in doing, in opposition to the united dissuasions of Lady Kinross, de Briançon, and Erina.

Although it was late when they arrived there, he would not depart until he had seen Erina restored to that tranquillity, which the occurrences of that eventful evening had disturbed too much to allow her regaining immediately, notwithstanding the command she possessed over her mind and her efforts to regain her accustomed composure of spirits.

At the solicitations of her friends, she recounted to them all that happened from her extraordinary disappearance, to the moment of her wonderful release; softening, as far as was consistent with truth, those expressions of the count's speeches, which it would have hurt her delicacy to repeat with his coarseness: at the same time, concealing as much as possible whatever might instigate de Briançon to think himself insulted. Against thus irritating his high spirits to demand satisfaction, by challenging his superior officer, in opposition, to military order and propriety, which enforces due subordination, Erina's animated friendship warned her prudence so successfully, as left her little cause to fear that the viscount would retract the solemn promise she had extorted from him,

that he would desist from calling out de l'Armencour, on her account, as his offence against her had already been chastised in the most satisfactory manner.

When Erina reflected on the direful consequences to herself and others, which the prince's rescue of her, and subsequent decisive and gallant conduct had prevented, she regarded him indeed as her guardian angel; as a being superior to human nature, he appeared in her eyes; and her admiration and gratitude increased, if possible, on learning from the account she entreated him to give, the efforts he had made to save her from destruction.

"Surprised and alarmed by your sudden disappearance," said the prince, "I was still more astonished and terrified at your lengthened absence, when I was disappointed in not seeing you return to the assembly-room, as I had at first believed you would, from the assurances of several masks who stood near us during the pantomime. To obtain more decisive information relative to it, I went in search of the harlequin, columbine, pantaloon, and clown, who had acted a part in the interlude, in hopes that I might get some insight into the plan of the drama which had been performed; but my search after those characters who had played in it

was vain; and I only learned, from the master of the ceremonies, that they were people who had been hired by the conductors of the masquerade to afford the company an entertaining scene; and on hearing from him that the Count de l'Armencour had been the contriver of the pantomime, I sought him, to demand an explanation of the occurrence.

"Our having recognised the count under the disguise of the golden armour, gave me an opportunity of immediately discovering that he had withdrawn from the assembly, as I could not find him in any of the rooms.

"This observation increased my alarm by a kind of indefinable presentiment of some concealed danger, which suggested itself to my mind from the retrospect of the manner in which you received the assiduities of the count. I had too long and closely observed your behaviour to each other, to doubt that his addresses had been rejected, and that he was determined to pursue his desire of obtaining that hand to which he boldly aspired. My observation of his character, which had been confirmed by the public voice, gave me every reason to believe him too unprincipled to put any restraint on the violent passions I had remarked him to possess. Convinced I had every thing to

dread from a man who was a professed atheist and libertine, I resolved to trace whither he was gone. The best means of doing so appeared to my judgment, to be an enquiry relative to him amongst the guards posted at the door. From the Seapoys I learned that no mask of his description had passed the portico; and on demanding amongst the attendants belonging to the company at the ball, if the count's servants were in waiting, I heard they had been desired to have his palanquin in readiness at a private entrance in a back inclosure which opened into a narrow bye-way behind the assembly-rooms.

"Having instantly commanded a large party of people to follow me, I flew to the place which had been indicated to me; and endeavoured to open the gate into the inclosure, which I perceived was secured against any entrance. It immediately occurred to me to force my way into the court; but whilst I was considering the means of putting this design into execution, I heard a bustle within; and making a sign for profound silence amongst my attendants, I found, from the conversation on the other side of the wall, that the palanquin was to convey a lady to the count's house by the unfrequented road to which the lane led.

"To describe all the emotions that I experi-

enced at this intelligence would be absolutely impossible. Scarcely master of my reason, I had sufficient, however, to suggest to me that the most prudent measure to baffle the infamous designs, and frustrate the plot of the diabolical count, would be to lie in ambush for the palanquin in its passage; and knowing it must be carried through a lane leading from the place into which the assembly-rooms opened, I quitted the back gate with my followers, lest the sight of us might alarm the ravishers before they were completely in our power; and posting ourselves in a concealed situation, to surround and arrest the palanquin as it passed, Heaven permitted us to be the means of counteracting the wicked plot of destroying the happiness of a being whose virtue was the peculiar care of righteousness.

"All that followed," continued the prince, bowing with a particular expression of sentiment in his looks and graceful gestures, "is known to you, amiable and beloved lady; therefore nothing remains for me to add, except the declaration that I am equally proud and happy to have been thus blessed by Providence in being chosen as an instrument to protect a person, as interesting to my heart as to the kindred spirits of celestial perfection.

" May I continue," he added, rising from his seat on the sofa beside Erina, and bowing to take his leave,—" may I continue," he repeated with emphatic earnestness, " to be blessed in being permitted to remain the guardian genius of superior beauty and virtue!"

Erina, smiling through tears of pleasure and gratitude, took from her pocket the casket presented to her that evening by the prince, and which his speech had called to her recollection; and, admiring the beauty of this sumptuous gift, she assured his highness she would ever carefully preserve it for the sake of her guardian genius, not that she wanted any thing to recal to her mind the numerous great obligations which gratitude would impress on her remembrance to the latest moment of the life she owed to him: " yet," added Erina with a deep sigh, " should fate ever restore me to my country and relations, I shall rejoice to have this precious testimony of the elegant munificence and invaluable friendship of the prince of Azimabad, to shew my friends; who, in this magnificent present of solid gold, enriched with every costly gem, will behold a true emblem of the illustrious donor, and how much I am indebted to his gallant attention and kindness."

Erina's smile, her sigh, and even her tears, suppressed with difficulty, were answered by those which sympathy extorted from the keen sensibility of the prince: he smiled, then sighed heavily, and his fine eyes glistened with acute feeling of mingled emotions. The flattering manner of her receiving his gift delighted his soul, where love whispered hopes of its success; yet that transport was checked by the mention of the possibility of their parting. The cruel thought brought tears into the prince's eyes; and feeling it impossible to conceal his rising agitation, he retired, profoundly bowing an adieu, while his looks in silent eloquence expressed unutterable things.

The courtesies of Rosaline, the friendly pressure de Briançon gave the prince s offered hand, and the tearful smiling salutation of Erina, expressed also more than language could have said.

After joining in a recapitulation of her sufferings, her gratitude to Heaven, and her illustrious deliverer, and her uneasiness lest his wound might have worse consequences than his courage apprehended possible, Erina consented to retire to rest, at the solicitations of her friends.

Having hastily laid aside her habiliments, which

reminded her of the extraordinary events of the evening, and having dismissed her attendant Silvia to the adjoining apartment, where Zeleida slept in profound peace, Erina performed her nightly devotions with more than usual fervour, awakened by the signal mercies she had just experienced in escaping a dreadful fate. Like a true Christian, Erina prayed for her enemies, and shuddered to think how near de l'Armencour might be to the great account that would be required when he had passed this transitory life, which he had spent in more than common turpitude.

In a train of reflections, such as a serious mind might be supposed to entertain after the occurrences that had happened to her within the few last eventful hours, Erina was retiring to rest, when the wish of again admiring her beautiful casket took her to the dressing-table upon which she had placed her sumptuous gift. As she was examining its exquisite work, and the precious stones that adorned it, she sought the spring by which it opened, and to her surprise beheld the most superb diamond necklace, bracelets, and ear-pendants, with a magnificent crescent for her head, a cestus, and a pair of the richest armlets, which were surpassed, if possible, in beauty by a ring, and a broach for her bosom.

Her astonishment at the unexpected discovery of these costly presents, was, however, surpassed on finding a letter under the jewels addressed to herself, in which she read as follows:

" Deign to accept, fairest of beings, and most beloved, the accompanying gift which your guardian genius presents as the tribute of his devotion to your service, and as the emblem of your perfections, and the adoration they excite: an assemblage of the choicest and most valued gifts of nature can best represent your personal and mental endowments, and the estimation in which those endowments are universally held.

" Amongst the crowd of your adorers, fairest of women, Jaffier Mahomed supplicates most humbly for your smiles, with a passion that takes its date from the first moment he was blessed by a sight of you in your native kingdom. The view of your beauty, blooming in all the charms of virgin modesty, preserved my youthful heart from every temptation to vicious pleasures, and kept it purified and immaculate by a first chaste love, which has strengthened into an attachment that can terminate only with my existence. Deign, then, to accept vows of eternal fidelity, from a soul whose sincerity renders it worthy to offer you its tenderest homage.

"I am sanctioned by the approving voice of my illustrious and excellent father, and by the most earnest solicitations of my noble and admirable mother, to offer you, in addition to the entire possession of a warm, an innocent, and a constant heart, the share of our princely state.

"In the palace of our ancient sovereignty you will solely reign with unbounded sway over the affections and domestic will of Jaffier Mahomed, if you condescend, fair maid, by bestowing your heart and hand upon him, to associate yourself with him in the tender parental regard of his revered parents.

"How I have loved you, my future adoration and fidelity will convince you, by my constant attention to all that can conduce to your happiness, if you allow me the felicity of remaining through life your guardian genius.

"Your wearing the accompanying ring when we next meet, I shall consider as a sign that you will permit me to offer the vows of my faithful heart to you, on which entirely depends the happiness of

"Your devoted servant,

"JAFFIER MAHOMED."

With strong and mixed emotions, Erina perused this address, which first discovered to her the real state of her own heart, that she was far from suspecting had been impressed with sentiments tenderer than gratitude and friendship for the prince. The avowal of a serious passion on his part surprised her little less, as she had persuaded herself his attentions proceeded entirely from a a nature enthusiastically benevolent, and manners polished to gallant courtesy. His frequent mention of the decided preference he felt for the European fair sex, had seemed to her less an implied compliment to herself than a natural effusion of filial affection for a mother, of whom he frequently expressed a perfect adoration. That filial reverence, so congenial with her own feelings for parents whom death and a cruel absence had endeared with an increased tenderness to her soul, had contributed, amongst innumerable other virtues displayed in the prince's character in brightest lustre, to win her admiration, and fix her regard upon him as a being almost superior to human nature. Often when his perfections most charmed her, she lamented he was not a Christian; and this regret returned with greater sorrow at this moment on the discovery that their interest for each other was superior to the sentiment of friendship. Flattering as it was to her heart to find such a one

as the admirable prince possessed devoted to her, and highly as she estimated the extraordinary beauty of his person, his superiorly elegant taste and manners, his matchless and innumerable graces, his wonderful abilities and talents, and the sterling worth of his character, she felt an unconquerable aversion to the idea of accepting the addresses of a Mahometan.

Under this impression, at the suggestions of refined feeling, she replaced the jewels in the casket with a determination to return with delicacy, gifts it was impossible she could retain with propriety.

Erina closed the casket with a deep sigh. It was not the rejection of the sumptuous gift that grieved her—she was affected at the idea of wounding the sensibility of the amiable prince; and weeping at the reflection that decorum forbid her henceforth associating with him in that intimate and constant intercourse which would nourish in the illustrious youth's susceptible and keenly feeling soul, sentiments, it became a duty to herself, to him, and to Heaven, to discourage by avoiding every thing that could awaken mutual tender sensations, and regrets, Erina took up the billet, and perused with tearful eyes the avowal of

the prince's ardent and refined passion, and the declaration that his happiness depended on her acceptance of his addresses. "Alas!" sighed Erina, "what a hapless fate is mine!—to wound the amiable being I esteem and enthusiastically regard—to repress my first tender affection as illegitimate, and carry regrets of it to my tomb. How many claims has Jaffier Mahomed to my breast! As the preserver of my life, at the hazard of his own, he has a right to expect the devotion of mine to his happiness. As the protector of my peace, my fame, and honour, his demands on my gratitude are great indeed—yes! and heaven is witness how much of gratitude I feel for him whom it forbids me to love."

A burst of unutterable anguish convulsed Erina's bosom; she pressed the billet to her palpitating heart, and taking up the crucifix, which she always wore pendant round her neck, she kissed the symbol of her faith, ejaculating a prayer of intercession for her own support in christian principles, whilst she made a mental vow never to unite herself to any one who did not believe in her Saviour's atonement: to this the pious girl added a devout aspiration for the prince's conversion to the true faith. She again kissed the crucifix, and replacing

it in her bosom, she dropped a tear on the billet as she folded and laid it on her dressing-table, and with a heavy sigh retired to her bed---not to sleep, but pass in review her situation.

Disturbed by a train of perplexing and painful reflections, Erina passed the night in watchful anxiety for the dawn, which at length broke. But the morning, for whose returning light she had been inexpressibly impatient, brought no ease to her agitated mind. She doubted not that an eager impatience to pay his accustomed engaging attentions would bring the prince to the villa at an early hour, in spite of the indisposition she feared might have been occasioned by his wound, and his little consideration of it, on the preceding night. All the risks he had incurred for her sake rose to her remembrance, and made her feel agonized at the idea that an insuperable obstacle debarred her from testifying her gratitude for the weighty obligations he had conferred on her. "Instead of devoting myself to the care of the amiable prince's happiness," said Erina to herself in mental parley, "I must wound the keen sensibility of my noble preserver, my generous friend, my kind instructor, my gallant defender."

Dissolved in tears, she lay in melancholy reflection, when Silvia and Zeleida entered her apartment.

Accustomed to rise with the sun, Erina shook off the indolence that sorrow had occasioned, and, languid in frame, and dejected in mind, she endeavoured to appear composed and cheerful, in order to avoid giving more uneasiness to Zeleida; who, with tender solicitude, noticed the faded bloom and diminished spirits of her amiable instructress.

To breathe the refreshing air of early day amongst the garden's cooling shades, Erina and her Hindoo companion as usual walked to the temple. The sun in splendour rising in a cloudless sky spread radiance on the face of nature, which smiled around in sweetly blooming flowers, while the melody of birds, which used to wake her soul to joy, now melted it to tender sadness. Melancholy stole on her heart in pensive silence. Erina sighed, and a tear of sympathy glistened in the beams of Zeleida's eyes. "You are sorrowful, lady!" said the gentle Hindoo: "you have often told me when I wept, that prayer was the cure of sadness; you have paid your morning devotions, and yet continue to grieve for some cause, of which I see traces of affliction.

Zeleida will unite her prayers with those of her friend, for the restoration of her peace." Thus saying, she pressed the hands of Erina, and kissed the crucifix pendant at her bosom.

Through tears of affection Erina smiled her thanks on the amiable convert from idolatry to christianity. As if inspired by Heaven, a thought cheered her soul with the hope that the being to whom she owed the preservation of her life, to whom she was indebted for even greater obligations in rescuing her from worse than death, might embrace at her entreaty the faith that would make him heir of eternal life. Overjoyed at the idea of thus repayng the cares of her guardian genius in becoming his, Erina wiped away the tear of sadness, and exhilarated, with Zeleida, ran to embrace the gentle Rosaline, who saluted her friend with a joyful smile, which was reflected in the fine countenance of Erina, and her Asiatic companion.

As she did not understand a syllable of the English language, her presence was no constraint to the confidence Erina had resolved to repose in the bosom of her first and dearest friend, to whom she related an account of the present and letter contained in the casket, with all the sensations to which they had given birth. As Erina considered

Rosaline a second self, no idea, no hope, nor fear was concealed from her knowledge: and, as they possessed similar minds, their opinions and sentiments coincided in this as in every other subject on which they discoursed.

The casket and its contents were examined by Rosaline with every sentiment which a heart of sensibility could feel, on an occasion calculated to awaken its most powerful emotions; and, after breakfast, de Briançon was taken into confidence and consultation in an affair which Erina felt his friendship obliged her to impart to him.

The viscount, although a perfect infidel with respect to any one dying for love, felt it requisite to ride off immediately to Chandenagore, to enquire after the health of the Prince of Azimabad, whose spirited conduct had endeared him to his perfect esteem, and about whom he was desirous to learn intelligence, independent of Erina's anxiety on the same subject.

Before the viscount reached the prince's residence, he had left it to visit the villa by water, as the inflammation and pain of his wound made it impossible for him to bear any other conveyance than that of a budgerow, where he could repose

at ease while the rapid stream of the smoothly flowing river carried him swiftly, without motion, to the spot whither his impatient wishes flew before him on the fluttering wings of eager solicitude.

As he approached the villa with mingled hope and fear, his eyes, directed to the temple, which was endeared to him as the favourite retreat of Erina, caught a glimpse of her beautiful figure, seated in solitary meditation on the steps that led down to the river.

With her head reclining on her snowy hand, she was absorbed in such deep reflection, that the prince had already leaped from the budgerow before she was aware of his arrival. At the unexpected sight of the being at this moment the most interesting to her, and who had been the sole object of her thoughts since she left Rosaline and Zeleida after breakfast, and repaired alone to indulge some tears in the temple, Erina started from her seat, and seeing in the fine countenance of the engaging youth a strong expression of anxiety, which had faded the ruddy tint of his complexion to the most touching paleness, she smiled mournfully through her tears, and stretching forth her trembling hand, in the tenderest accents, she demanded how he found himself; then, without

waiting a reply, she added an expression of the liveliest fears about his health.

Joy, raised by sanguine hope, illumined the handsome features of the prince with a celestial smile as he gazed on Erina with love-beaming eyes. Inspired by her kindness to indulge the expectation of seeing she had assumed the ring that might license his addresses, he seized the offered hand of the blushing maid, and in the ecstasy of empassioned tenderness, he pressed it for the first time to his lips; then fixing his eyes upon its snowy whiteness, unadorned with any gem, he cast a glance of anguished disappointment on Erina, which seemed to reproach her for having encouraged false hopes. Her heart read his meaning in his looks, as relinquishing her passive hand, he raised his to his forehead, and retreated, staggering to support himself against one of the columns in the temple.

This was a moment of acute sensibility, when without any infringement of decorum, the cold forms of ceremonious politeness might be laid aside by the most scrupulous delicacy for the natural effusions of sentiment. Erina felt this; and, approaching the prince as he leaned pensively against the pillar, and concealed his face with the

hand on which his head rested, she laid her soft and beautiful fingers gently on his wounded arm, that was supported in a sling, and said, in accents breathing all the tenderness of her soul, "Oh! my noble and tenderly regarded protector, it distracts me to see you thus!—Your paleness and evident debility too plainly tell my anxiety you have done wrong in venturing out, indisposed as you are, this morning. Why did your highness come abroad to-day? Let me entreat you, dear prince, to return home, and preserve your life, for the sake of your affectionate friends."

As Erina addressed the object of her anxiety he uncovered his face, and rivetted his eyes on her's with the softest expression in his looks; and when she had ceased speaking, he laid his trembling hand on her's, as it still pressed his arm, and thus addressed the blushing girl: "My soul thanks you, lovely maid, for the kind interest you so sweetly express. Yet why are you so solicitous about the being whom you refuse to honour by the acceptance of a gift on which his happinessdepends? Surely you must have known that my impatience to pay the tenderest homage of my heart to its possessor would have brought me to your presence this morning; yet I in vain seek the sign which

would encourage me to hope this homage acceptable."

"I will not conceal from your highness," said Erina, sweetly smiling, "how rejoiced I should be to see you, were I assured your coming abroad this morning would not be attended with dangerous consequences to your health."

The enamoured prince, transported by Erina's kindness, so delicately evinced in the soft tones of her voice as well as in her expressions, again seized her yielding hand, and pressing it to his lips, ejaculated, "Enchanting maid! may I indulge the hope that you will permit me to assume the title of your guardian genius for life?"

"On one condition, prince," said the blushing girl hastily, with an arch smile. "Name it!" cried Jaffier Mahomed, "I will purchase that privilege at all costs."

Erina trembled with mingling and indefinable sensations as she glanced a look at the animated expression of the interesting prince's countenance: love beaming in his eyes, irradiating every feature, and speaking in his air, declared, with his words, he

would purchase her hand at any price. But had she a right to dispose of that hand? This was a question filial duty put to her judgment. Erina reflected on her situation until all her ideas became confused. The most tremendous step of life was now before her: to engage herself for ever to a foreigner, and especially an Asiatic, appeared to require more resolution than she possessed. Yet the being who addressed her surpassed in every respect all she had ever seen; his personal attractions, his extraordinary talents, his state and fortune itself, although great as imagination could conceive, appeared but as secondary advantages when compared with the superiority of his exalted character. Erina had often thought he wanted nothing but the profession of the christian faith to be perfect; to that faith she might now convert this noble being: could she do less for the preserver of her life, her fame, her happiness, her honour, than devote that life, that fame, that happiness, that honour to the salvation of so amiable a being? All Erina's enthusiastic sentiments and noble ideas, not only licensed, but urged her to fulfil a sacred duty enjoined by gratitude; and instantly deciding on a work she considered most requisite as it was virtuous, she thus addressed her empassioned lover:

"In token of the gratitude I owe your highness

for innumerable great obligations, I would become your guardian genius, as you have been mine. In return for your having preserved my life, I would employ it in your service; and as an acknowledgment for your having rescued me from ruin and misery, I would convert you to the true saving faith of christianity. I would make an exchange of gifts also; and for the inestimably precious presents of the costly jewels your highness's generosity bestowed on me with a grace that almost precludes the possibility of refusing the offer, I beg leave to entreat your acceptance of the best gift I can bestow in return for the elegant casket, and its contents." Saying this, Erina, with a trembling hand, detached her crucifix from her bosom, and presented it to the prince with a blushing tearful smile; whilst he, dropping the passive hand she had permitted him to hold in his tender grasp, bowing, rejected the offered gift as the only thing he could refuse from her hands. A mutual intelligence of looks conveyed to each the other's meaning without the aid of language. Both remained silent for some moments, yet gazing mutually with reciprocal increased admiration at the firmness of principle when opposed to the fascinating temptation of yielding to the most seductive of all sentiments.

The prince, who felt its most powerful influence

over his ardent soul, as he stood near the object of his adoration with his eyes rivetted on her irresistible charms, started from a trance of rapturous observation to the recollection of his situation; and, dreading all the possible effects that might be produced in his mind by the persuasion of a being whose power over his heart was unbounded, he resolved to decline the unequal contest, where his inclination might arm his passions to oppose his reason; and, making a profound obeisance, was retiring with an expression of seriousness which Erina had never before seen him wear. "I fear," said she timidly, "my zeal for the happiness of my kind protector has offended him." She dropped a tear as she spoke, and the prince, sighing heavily, once more seized her offered hand, and bowing on it, pressed it to his forehead. He would have spoken, but agitation checked his utterance. Erina seeing him deeply touched, believed this moment propitious to convert the heart she had thus affected, and told him she flattered herself he would not continue to refuse an exchangeof presents: to which he thus replied: "In pity, lady, cease to urge what I feel it is my duty to reject. Sensible of your sway over my soul, I am aware my reason might be misled by passion to adopt your faith from interest rather than conviction. Nothing is as blind as inclination; nothing is so apt to deceive us as our own heart;

nothing is more fallacious than human judgment; and nothing so difficult as to keep our mind from prejudice and prepossession, except the discovery of our true motives for opinions and actions, which are very frequently regulated by the powerful influence of our ruling passions for temporal interest, instead of being guided by virtuous principles to real wisdom."

"But a soul like your's," replied Erina, with animated earnestness, "will not be misled by passion: your superior understanding will guide your decision, unbiassed by inclination; a heart virtuous as your's cannot deceive; a mind of your intellectual powers has nothing to fear from false judgment, prejudice, and erroneous opinions on any subject you examine. I would not wish your highness to adopt the christian faith in compliance with my entreaty, but from a conviction of its truth, which a short study of its principles must prove. Accept this crucifix as a testimony of my zeal for your conversion, as I have accepted the valuable gifts that are the emblems of your friendship towards me. These presents I can only consent to retain on condition your highness will receive my offering."

"I must not yield to temptation, but fly it,"

cried the prince. "Adieu, lady! I ought to bid you farewell for ever—I ought to make a solemn vow never again to trust myself in your presence. Human nature is corrupt, and the delight of living for you, the fascinating hope of obtaining a stronger interest in your esteem, might bribe my conscience to betray me. Adieu, then, object of my first, my last affection! adieu!"

The prince bowed on Erina's hand, and, with an agitated mien, waved to the attendants in his barge to row it from the station where it waited, to the temple. As the budgerow approached, to bear him from the maid he idolized more than ever, since the flattering high regard she had with the most engaging sincerity displayed, afforded him a convincing proof of the most delicate and disinterested affection for him, the grief of tearing himself from her kept him silent. The language of his expressive looks, however, declared his conflicting emotions. In his fine countenance and graceful action, the struggles of sentiment and principle, and the triumph of virtue over passion, were strongly delineated and pourtrayed with the liveliest colours of sensibility. Erina's was indescribably moved by their striking effect; and, as the prince bent before her in a parting obeisance, she burst into tears at the idea she was bidding her

kind protector a last farewell; and, sighing a touching adieu in return for his affectingly silent salutation, Erina added, with a faltring voice, a benediction that sunk in the soul of the prince an agonizing sensation as he leaped into the barge; whither Erina's eyes followed him until lengthening distance hid from her view the majestically elegant figure of the amiable youth, who never appeared so interesting in her sight as when she descried him seated in a mournful attitude, with his eyes fixed on her, as the departing barge was rowed from the spot where she stood. In pensive sadness she remained gazing with tearful eyes on the lessening budgerow; and when she could no longer distinguish it on the glittering stream of the Hoogley, she continued to look on the swiftly gliding current till her head turned giddy with the confusion of her thoughts.

"He is gone for ever!" sighed the weeping girl. "But I have done my duty." This reflection consoled her; and, wiping away her tears, she endeavoured to compose herself sufficiently to narrate to Rosaline an account of her interview with the prince. The scene gained interest from her description of it; and the gay de Briançon himself was affected by a relation which increased, if possible, his admiration of Erina and her illustrious lover.

The viscount had an affectionate nature, and although he had no conception of enthusiastic love and a romantic passion, he most sincerely pitied the prince and Erina. Perceiving traces of tears on her faded bloom, and some sympathetic drops glistening in the bright azure of the gentle Rosaline's eyes, de Briançon gave a hand to each of his fair companions; and, in order to renovate their dejected spirits, he, laughing, said, "Behold an occasion that proves the boasted power of love to be less than it is generally supposed!"

Rosaline smiled faintly at the viscount's drollery to thank him for this effort to amuse their sweet pensive friend; and, anxious to contribute to dissipate her sadness, said to de Briançon in playful pleasantry, "I know, my good cousin, you are quite an infidel with respect to the tender passion. I agree with you, that a disappointment in love will not *always* kill. However, should the prince's affection for Erina bring him a converted Christian to her feet, it will prove the triumph of love sufficiently to silence all your raillery on the subject."

A faint blush passed over Erina's cheeks, and she endeavoured to resume her usual cheerfulness with her accustomed employments; but painting became uninteresting to her, music was too touch-

ing, work was dull, and reading the favourite authors she had perused with her late instructor, reminded her too much of his absence. The book of nature itself, which always heretofore delighted her, had ceased to charm. Even her orisons recalled painful sensations. To converse with Rosaline, and instruct the docile and attached Zeleida, deeply affected Erina. Solitude was melancholy; but gay company she found insufferable. Her walks, her rides, and society had lost their interest in her opinion; the world seemed a barren waste, and existence she would have thought a blank, had not futurity, beaming eternal felicity on her faith and hope, made her piety connect this life with the next, and give to the present consequence, as the commencement of immortality.

Erina had returned the jewels to the prince by the viscount, who daily called on him, and found him more than ever the empassioned lover of Erina, yet firm in his resolve never to obtain her hand by the sacrifice of the religion in which he had been educated.

"I have no merit in this," said Jaffier Mahomed one day to de Briançon, "for Erina could not esteem me were I to change my faith from interested motives."

The viscount's attachment to his illustrious friend became each day stronger, as his character rose, and his health declined. The uneasiness of the prince's mind, and the fever attendant on his wound, which, although trivial at first, put on a serious appearance, from the agitation of his feelings, confined him at home. This circumstance he rejoiced at, rather than lamented, as he feared he might have been tempted to the villa, notwithstanding his conviction that he ought to avoid the presence of Erina.

As she was impressed with the idea that the cessation of his visits depended on his principles, rather than confinement, de Briançon prudently spared her the anxiety of knowing the prince's sufferings were increased by illness; and a melancholy tedious week after her interview with him, passed in the persuasion that all intercourse between them had ceased for ever, when Erina was surprised by the following billet:

"When conviction told me I ought to fly your presence, I resolved to cease that daily homage I have so long offered you. There is no occasion to apologize for the absence which duty commanded. It would be equally absurd were I

to arrogate much merit in desisting from assiduities which it costs me infinite pain to relinquish, since your delicacy, as well as my honour, interdict my henceforth paying you the tender attentions of an unhappy passion.

"Deprived of any intercourse with you, admirable and ever beloved lady, I experienced a melancholy pleasure in lingering near the attractive spot you inhabit; and torn with the keen anguish of a hopeless, yet endless passion, my heart found some consolation in believing I might yet be useful to you in guarding you from any machinations of the count, and I resolved to be a close observer of his motions.

"From the minute intelligence respecting him, which I obtain from unquestionable authority, I learn that he has taken his passage for France in the ship which sails next month for that country; and find he has quitted Chandenagore, where he would undoubtedly feel himself most aukwardly situated, on the plea of recovering his health for the voyage to Europe, and that he is to travel up the country in the intermediate time.

"As I have the best reason to believe from these circumstances that you have nothing farther

to apprehend from the late disturber of your peace, I feel I ought to return to my paternal home at Azimabad, where filial duty demands my presence. Adieu, then, most charming, most adored of women!

"That the great Being who preserves the universe may bless and protect you ever, is the earnest prayer of your wretched lover, who must now bid you adieu for ever!

"JAFFIER MAHOMED."

The receipt of this billet affected Erina deeply. She shed tears of gratitude and affection over the traces of her noble protector's hand for his present as well as past solicitude; and feeling some acknowledgments due for attentions which had made an indelible impression on her heart, she immediately took up the pen, and addressed the following letter to the Prince of Azimabad:

"IMPELLED by the most grateful sense of my immense obligations to my illustrious and amiable defender, I cannot receive the last testimony of the friendship with which he honours me, without assuring him that his eternal adieu has most deeply affected me. To the care of that great Being whom your highness invokes for me, I daily recom-

mend you in my orisons. May the Author of the universe, in the approbation of your superior virtue, extend his mercy to you as to Cornelius, whose prayers and alms found favour in heaven; and may he who sacrificed himself to save the world from sin, and brought immortality to light, turn your soul to believe in him as the only propitiation eternal justice can accept for the crimes of degenerate mankind!

"May the spirit of divine truth teach you, that human goodness, however excellent, is insufficient for man's salvation, without faith in our Redeemer's atonement, which can alone satisfy the perfection of incorruptible righteousness! May your reason, abjuring the errors of a false religion, see the necessity of a divine Mediator between the offended Deity and fallen man; and, acknowledging the all-sufficiency of our blessed Saviour's mission and sacrifice, trust in him, and in him alone, and make you a true and faithful follower of Christ! And may your future reliance in his merits impart a saving essence to your virtuous deeds, giving them the only efficacy they can claim, which is as tests of a lively faith, which requires acts of obedience to the supreme will!

"As our intercourse terminates, your embracing

christianity cannot be attributed to any thing but conviction of its superior doctrines, and as a proof that I have no interested motive in pressing your conversion, I shall seize the first opportunity to retire from this country to my native kingdom; resolved to brave all the sorrows, and submit to all the difficulties, which made me leave my home to escape persecution, rather than by remaining any longer here, sacrifice the interests of my friends and protectors. Your highness, who is acquainted with my mind as well as my history, will easily conceive how painful my present situation must be; and that in forwarding the spiritual interest of my noble defender, who preserved my life and honour, and in restoring my kind and generous friends, de Briançon and Lady Kinross to their connections in Europe, I promote my own happiness.

"I will therefore indulge the hope that your highness will not any longer regret our separation. I flatter myself that when I am far distant in my native land, you will cherish my remembrance with a gratitude similar to that which impresses my obligations to you in indelible characters in my affectionate heart. And I will also trust that when the trials of this life are over, we may meet in those regions where pure attachments are eternized in endless happiness!

"Until then, farewell, my kind protector! and believe, that the being distinguished by the tender friendship of the Prince of Azimabad, will recollect, until the last moment of the life and honour he preserved, the obligations which claim the constant gratitude and daily prayers of

"ERINA O'BRIEN."

In the pleasing reflection of having performed an important duty by the dispatch of this letter, and in the virtuous resolution of pressing the viscount's and Rosaline's return to Europe, Erina experienced returning composure.

The prince's departure, and the absence of the Count de l'Armencour, left her unagitated by hope of seeing the illustrious lover who had endeared himself to her by her preservation, or any dread of being again persecuted by the ravisher from whom she had been rescued. Erina's days passed in the calmness which innocence ever feels as a placid enjoyment of existence, even in the absence of all the pleasures of life.

Rosaline's friendship marked with returning peace the tranquillity which again illumined the sweet countenance of Erina with soft smiles of contentment, and expected with impatience the

arrival of letters, which she expected from Europe, to determine her either to grant or refuse her consent to her beloved companion's proposal of returning home; when all the inhabitants of the villa were thrown into the utmost consternation by the sudden and unaccountable disappearance of Erina and Zeleida.

They had been seen walking by moonlight on the terrace, and could not be traced farther, notwithstanding the assiduous and constant search of all the neighbourhood for several days.

To describe the agony of Rosaline on this event exceeds the power of language. Whatever imagination could depict as most dreadful, occurred to her mind respecting the extraordinary fate of her dearest friend.

After the first shock of her loss, which nearly deprived the gentle Lady Kinross of reason, she fell into the stupor of sorrow, that succeeds the anguish acute sensibility experiences in a hopeless calamity; and praying for the resignation so necessary in distress, she felt, that *amidst the most violent bursts of woe for irremediable misfortunes, the pious mind seeks and finds consolation in religion; at whose cheering whispers the soul is*

soothed to peace, even in the most direful calamities, and the maniac melancholy of affliction turns from frantic grief and wild despair to meek submission and placid suffering.

CHAP. III.

"The terrors of conscience come like a sudden storm in the night, and startle infamy from its couch of criminality to horror, and a fruitless penitence; but when the mercy of Heaven beams forgiveness in returning sunshine, and gives a reprieve to guilt, it plunges again into fatal forgetfulness, in a succession of new crimes, until destruction becomes inevitable.

"Such is the life, and such the death of sinners; which is a warning only to the virtuous to beware of the path that leads to perdition!"

ALL the dreadful conjectures Rosaline's fears suggested to her timidity respecting the fate of her beloved friend, exceeded not the terrors of the wretched Erina's situation, which was equally inexplicable to herself as to those who vainly sought her.

One evening, at closing twilight, she was taking her accustomed walk with Zeleida, to enjoy the

refreshing breeze of coming night after a sultry day, when they heard a boat rowing close to the river edge, under the terrace which overhung the Hoogley; and as Erina and her companion were strolling pensively on the soft verdure of its grassy bank, they listened in silence to the pleasing sound of the oars dashing into the water in measured time, while the last rays of twilight, lingering on the stream, shewed its translucent current meandering amidst the surrounding shades. By the moon-beams which the brilliant crescent shed in silvery radiance, Erina saw a budgerow advancing towards the station she took to observe it; and on approaching the place where she stood, the rowers rested on their oars, and the steersman leaving the helm, came forward, making an obeisance, and demanded permission for a lady to land at the villa, and proceed thence in a palanquin to Chandenagore, as she was alarmed at being on the water at night. Before Erina could give the lady an invitation to the hospitable dwelling where she was assured Rosaline would rejoice to accommodate any traveller, and especially one of her own sex, with whatever might be required, an elegant female shewed herself at one of the Venetian windows of the inclosed barge; and accosting Erina in English, apologized for the necessity of intruding

on the politeness of a stranger. "I fear," added the lady, "you may not, Madam, understand my language; unfortunately for me, I speak French very indifferently, and am a solitary traveller in this country to the English presidency."

The surprise of hearing herself thus addressed in her own tongue, which had kept Erina silent for an instant, changed to a sentiment of pleasure in this unexpected meeting with one of her own sex, and, perhaps, nation, to whom she might render service, and certainly afford much enjoyment, by an introduction to her charming friend, Lady Kinross. Elated with the idea of being useful, the amiable girl addressed the unknown lady in a tone of voice and manner that spoke the beneficence of an angelic mind; and, with the most gracious courtesy, requesting her to honour the villa with her presence, Erina desired the boatmen to conduct the barge to the landing-place, at the octagon temple, whither she instantly repaired, on the light elastic step of joy and delightful expectation, with Zeleida, to welcome the engaging guest, and lead her to the hospitable dwelling of the amiable Rosaline. Ever anxious to oblige, and impelled by the urbanity of her sweet disposition, Erina flew rather than ran to the place of

debarkation; and as she had gained the temple sooner than the budgerow could be rowed to the steps leading down to the river, she descended to the water-edge, with an intention of handing her visitor out of the barge, whilst Zeleida stood at the entrance of the temple. They had not long waited on their station when they saw the lady come out of the cabin, as the boatmen shoved the vessel to the landing-place, where several jumped on the steps, and threw a plank over the edge of the budgerow. Erina, intent upon the stranger's landing commodiously, drew near the side of the boat, and was addressing a most kindly courteous welcome to her when she found herself instantly seized by the bargemen, and carried by surprise, with Zeleida, into the cabin, where they were both confined forcibly, in spite of their screams, while the vessel was rowed off into the middle of the broad river, and was rapidly conveyed by the quick-flowing current to an unknown destination.

To the wild confusion of sudden terror, and reiterated bursts of frantic desperation, succeeded that settled deep-felt anguish which renders misfortune doubly severe by agonizing reflection. Erina's presented to her imagination a perspective of horrors magnified by the mysterious medium of uncertainty, through which her fancy viewed the

scenes of her future fate. That she had been seized by the order of the infamous de l'Armencour could not, in her opinion, admit a doubt; but in what manner he purposed to gratify his diabolical passions, remained enveloped from her in impenetrable secrecy, since nothing could lead her to the discovery of his resolutions, and she was left in total ignorance of his plans to vague conjectures, in which her apprehension of the worst calamities pressed every possible horror on fearful expectation. Dreadful, indeed, were her feelings whilst in close confinement with the timid and terrified Zeleida, Erina experienced, in addition to her own agonizing distress, the impossibility of consoling the companion of her sorrows for the unfortunate situation to which she was reduced on her account.

Several hours passed in tedious moments, lengthened by the quick succession of innumerable terrific ideas, during which, in utter darkness, the wretched prisoners reckoned the great distance of their way from the peaceful home whence they had been stolen, by the length of time spent in a passage, that, from unremitted rowing, and the motion of the vessel, appeared to have been sufficiently rapid to have carried them many leagues from the villa. Ignorant whither they were hastening, and dreading the ter-

mination of their voyage, every stroke of the oars made Erina's violently palpitating heart flutter with nearly convulsive trepidation.

Through the barricadoed windows of the small back cabin of the budgerow, where they were shut in by a locked door, the refreshing air of night, blowing from the coolest quarter over the river, prevented their being suffocated by the confinement of their situation: but the miserable prisoners looked in vain for light, as the moon set shortly after their embarkation; and through the sombre shades of the banks of the Hoogley, no taper, shooting even the faintest gleam from a distant human habitation, cheered the darkness. All was gloomy as Erina's thoughts, and the monotonous hum of the boatmen's voices, with the dismal sound of rippling waters as the vessel divided the undulating tide, and swiftly rushed through the current, added, if possible, to the melancholy forebodings of Erina's mind sensations of increased sadness, such as in the dejection of sorrow will arise from local circumstances, which have no connection with the distress we lament. In the present instance, however, the scene of depressing desolation around Erina, and every noise she heard, even the occasional total silence for a moment, pressed heavily on her aching heart a

keener sense of her misfortune, as she was reminded continually by all around her of the inevitable misery depending entirely on that forlorn situation. Hopeless of relief, she passed several hours, and was at length roused from the stupor of woe by the unlocking and opening of her prison-door. All her feelings now rose in alarm at the dread of consequences which might follow this interruption of her solitude, as she heard and perceived a bustle in the adjoining cabin, where, under a pendant brilliant lamp, she observed preparations for supper by the laying of several covers, with glasses and decanters of various wines. Imagining all this was spread for the infamous author of the plot, which she feared now too successfully laid for her total ruin and unavoidable shame, as she had every reason to believe her destroyer would, in malignant vengeance, boast his triumph, and proclaim her scandal, whatever it might cost him, Erina waited in trembling expectation of being seized in the rude grasp of the licentious count, who might, she supposed, have kept himself concealed, to further his diabolical purposes, until the moment when he could best execute them with certainty and impunity. Revolving in her terrified imagination these conclusions, Erina, in silence, gazed fearfully around her, and, after a few moments, perceived the lady who had seduced her

into her deplorable condition, approaching from the deck of the budgerow, followed by some black attendants of both sexes.

At the first glimpse of her seductress, Erina shuddered, and involuntarily turned away from her with aversion, notwithstanding the fascination of a strikingly captivating figure. Unrepulsed by averted glances of resentment, the lady accosted Erina with an address of winning kindness, and familiarly taking her hand, requested the pleasure of her presence in the next cabin at the supper-table; adding, in a tone of pleasantry, "Come, come, my amiable fellow passenger, do not be angry with me for the execution of a little innocent scheme, which I engaged to undertake for our mutual advantage; and which I will explain fully and freely if you will favour me with your company to take some refreshment, of which I am sure you must be in need."

Erina, somewhat puzzled what to infer from this address, which had demonstrated more politeness than malevolence, felt her heart softened, and permitted her unknown mysterious companion to hold the hand she had taken; the tranquillized girl even pressed the stranger's delicate fingers to conciliate her compassion; and feeling the pressure

returned, repeated this testimony of pacification, and kissing her hand, to engage her in a league of friendship, dropped a tear on it, which was intended as an act of contrition for having condemned her unheard on suspicion of bad intentions towards her, which had almost been done away.

The lady had promised an immediate and free disclosure of the affair, which she termed an innocent scheme that she had undertaken for their mutual advantage. Anxious for the elucidation of the extraordinary occurrence, Erina permitted her companion to conduct her to the supper-table, somewhat assured no immediate ill was intended, as there were only two plates and chairs put for their use at the board, which was spread with extreme elegance.

Being seated, the lady helped Erina to some chicken with an easy politeness, which convinced the observant girl her yet unknown companion was a woman of fashion, and perfectly conversant with the manners of the highest circles.

Erina had not any appetite, but her hostess so kindly pressed her to eat, that the obliging girl took something out of mere courtesy; requesting, at

the same time to be informed respecting her situation; to which demand the lady thus replied:

"Although I have not had the honour of an introduction to you, I am perfectly acquainted with your family, and was particularly intimate with a very dear friend of your's when in England. I have not long left that country, whither I purpose to return immediately."

It instantly occurred to Erina, that this lady might have been sent by her relations to reclaim her, that she had taken this means to get her by surprise out of Rosaline's protection, and that she was breaking the matter to her by degrees. Feeling it impossible to restrain her impatience to learn all the lady had to communicate, Erina hastily added, "You are commissioned, then, Madam, to take me to my family?"

"I am employed," my dear girl, "replied the handsome and agreeable stranger, to conduct you to a person who expects you with eager impatience, and of whom I am bound not to discover more to you at present than that a sudden change and surprise has been prepared for you, and that you are on your way to a friend, and to a situation where all that affection and splendour can afford for the

gratification of a most beloved object, waits your enjoyment."

This ambiguous speech was alarming rather than satisfactory to Erina; it was not the full and free explanation that had been promised. The lady had therefore deceived her again, not only by prevarication, but a breach of faith; and from this deviation from sincerity and truth, Erina conjectured the history of being acquainted with her family was also a falsehood, fabricated for bad designs. Disgusted as she felt herself at the deceptive arts and shameless duplicity of her companion, she ceased to confide in her; yet to offend her could not answer any good purpose; and the timid and unhappy girl resolved in prudence not to irritate the person in whose dreaded power she was, and therefore remained silent, pondering on the probable peril and mystery of her extraordinary situation.

Her hostess in the meanwhile did the honours of the table with infinite politeness and attention, pressing Erina to eat more than she felt inclined, and helping Zeleida also to an excellent supper, of which the unhappy creature took a very small portion, sympathizing sincerely in the distress of her

beloved friend, and regulating herself by her example.

During supper, Erina observed her entertainer with scrutinizing examination, and remarked she was in the prime of youth. Her features were regularly handsome, and her figure good, to which the cares of the toilette had lent every possible advantageous assistance that art could furnish; yet, in spite of beauty, gentility of air, elegance of dress, and an almost irresistible fascination of manner, Erina felt a repugnance to her new companion, originating equally in the part she had acted in the dishonourable and mysterious conduct towards her, and a certain inexplicable licentiousness of appearance, now first discovered, and which increased by the free use of wine, to which she in vain pressed her guests, who could not be prevailed on to taste any beverage except pure water. The lady drank glass after glass of the juice of the grape in a manner that shocked Erina's delicacy, and created a conviction, that the stranger must be a woman of the most abandoned principles, notwithstanding the air of fashion which almost marked her as a lady of high consequence. In spite of the gentle girl's general mildness of disposition, and the christian charity she always adopted in forming her judgment, she

conceived her unknown companion a creature of the worst description, who had inveigled her into her power for the vilest purposes. That the profligate de l'Armencour had instigated her seductress to her diabolical plan for his gratification, Erina was quite persuaded; and immediately fixing her eyes on the being who now excited her utmost aversion, she demanded if she was acquainted with the count. A sudden affirmation, contradicted by instantaneous and repeated negatives, was the reply to Erina's question, which convinced her that the abruptness of her interrogation had thrown her betrayer off her guard, to confess the truth she had been warned carefully to conceal, and that she had instantly endeavoured to repair the imprudent mistake by a repetition of falsehoods, to keep the victim of her wickedness in illusion till the moment of destruction, to insure the accomplishment of the meditated ruin.

The horrors of Erina's mind on this conviction surpass description, and even defy the conception of those who have not experienced the terrors her situation excited. Rising suddenly from the table, she complained of a violent giddiness in her head, accompanied by extreme sickness, and retired into the back cabin, in order to shun the sight of her infamous companion, and threw herself, in an almost

frantic agony of despair, on a kind of bed; where she suffered, in addition to the horrors of her reflections, the bodily pain and illness of which she had complained, and which were induced by the misery of her mind.

Zeleida, attentive to every look and movement of Erina, followed her into the sleeping-cabin, and kneeling at the side of her bed, pressed and kissed the hands of her beloved friend, praying fervently for their release from the unhappy situation in which they were involved; whilst in whispers, the pious girl joined her orisons for deliverance, and afterwards communicated all her fears and suspicions in the Hindoo language, that she knew would be unintelligible to the detested woman; who, having at length finished an intemperate supper, secured the door of the outward cabin by locks and bolts, and retired to the second bed in the back cabin, beside Erina, and soon dropped into a deep sleep, overpowered by excess at supper, whilst her two black female attendants lay down on the floor, and quickly fell into a profound slumber.

Zeleida remained still on her knees beside Erina, and in alternate pious ejaculations and

consolatory addresses, endeavoured to sooth her beloved companion in affliction.

Although the heavy breathing of the European female and her Asiatic attendants denoted they were not on guard over their prisoners, they heard by the voices and noise on the deck that a strong watch was kept against every attempt at escape, even had any occasion of a passing boat suggested an idea of a possible release by some desperate attempt to interest strangers to pity and relieve their distress. The hum of the steersman's chaunt over head, and the uninterrupted sound of the oars, continually proclaimed to Erina's aching heart, that each instant carried her farther from her beloved Rosaline; and whilst, with palpitating bosom, sensibility depicted in strongest colours to the imagination of the weeping girl, the distracting sorrows of tender friendship for her loss, which she knew must appear frightful and inexplicable to her protectors, de Briançon and Lady Kinross, Erina's throbbing heart was nearly convulsed at the reflection which pressed upon it with a weight of dire foreboding, that she was hastening to a destruction worse than the most dreadful death.

Fearful lest the gentle and delicate Zeleida

might be worn out with watching, Erina prevailed on her to lie down, although she was sensible sleep would not visit them. With her companion she had wasted the tedious night in sighs and tears; when towards dawn she perceived, through the Venetian blinds of the cabin windows, the heavens suddenly illumined with one continued glare of vivid lightning, while bursts of thunder, accompanied by tempestuous wind, and floods of rain, seemed to threaten universal devastation. To Erina, who had never, until that moment, witnessed the storms which at certain seasons frequently occur in the East, and far exceed in violence any tempest ever known in temperate latitudes, the war of the elements appeared now truly terrific, and more so from its sudden and unexpected burst, and the horrors of her situation.

As the blue-forked lightning darted, at short intervals, in every direction around, through the red glare of electric fire, which, in one continued stream of flame, and the atmosphere in a blaze, rapidly recurring peals of thunder, like the sound of artillery, seemed to burst over-head in stunning claps, and roared terrifically, till succeeded by more tremendous crashes; whilst howling blasts and deluges of rain, pouring down with the noise of a torrent precipitated from the clouds, in one

continued stream, added to the hoarse murmur of the swollen and violently agitated water that dashed against the vessel in quickly rolling surges, and the loud bellowing and confused trampling of the bargemen, presented to Erina a scene of horror as new as it was dismaying. The beating waves and pelting rain, mingled with streams of ethereal fire from the electric combustion of the clouds, and rude gusts of wind, came through the Venetian windows, which could offer no defence against the violence of the elements, and the whole cabin, with the beds, were deluged with wet in an instant.

The tremendous noises, the heaving of the vessel, and the ravages of the merciless storm, awakened Erina's drowsy companions to the horrors of their situation, which terrified them. The black girls instantly leaped from the floor, swimming in water, and gathering themselves upon a trunk in one corner of the outward cabin, hid their faces between their knees, and, stopping their ears with their hands, sat fixed in silent dread; whilst Erina's European companion, starting from her bed in wild affright, sprang towards the calm collected sufferers, screaming with dismay. Each gust of the tempest was answered by an hysteric sob, that seemed to convulse her whole frame; each forky gleam of lightning was marked by her shrieks;

to each peal of thunder she responded by a groan of agony; she trembled at the sound of the overwhelming torrent that poured around; and started at every motion of the tossing vessel as it was buffeted by the dashing waves; whilst flying to Erina, she grasped her with convulsive strength, and beseeched her to shield her from the fury of the contending elements. Moved to compassionate the sufferings of a guilty mind, Erina, although shrinking from the touch of a creature she considered polluted equally in person as in soul, could not bring herself to repulse with harshness the being she almost abhorred, because of her wickedness, rather than because of the ruin and misery in which she had involved her. Endeavouring gently to disengage herself from the author of her woe, who violently clasped her in her arms, Erina mildly desired her to be calm, and permitted her to find consolation by hiding her face in her bosom; whilst shedding tears of christian commiseration over the victim of wickedness, appalled by the voice of now awakened long-dormant conscience, the angelic girl requested her wretched companion in danger to pray to Heaven for the protection of an almighty Providence, and thus merit the mercy of an offended Deity.

At this gentle admonition of saint-like charity,

the object of Erina's pity looked up to her with wild glances of amazement and terror. Repentance, agonized by despair, convulsed her features to horrible contortions, and a phrenzied expression darting from her eyes, and inducing a livid paleness, gave her all the appearance of a maniac broken from chains, and sitting in the gloomy cells of Bedlam. The similitude struck Erina's fancy, and made her feel a tremour as she fixed a gaze of compassion on her terrified companion, and beheld her hair hanging disordered, her countenance haggard, and her clothes dripping with wet and clinging round her, whilst madness seemed to guide her gestures, distraction sat frowning on her brow, and her quivering lips, palsied with terror, and sealed in silence for some moments, seemed as if moving involuntarily to mutter internally the irrational whimsies of an infuriated brain. Shivering with terror rather than from the chilling breath of the tempest, her teeth chattered, and she was eyeing with wonder the composure of the resigned Erina's placidly beautiful countenance, when a louder clap of thunder than they had yet heard, made the pious girl bless herself; whilst the ejaculation, and the responsive "Amen!" of Zeleida, were drowned in the piercing shriek of their frantic companion, who, clasping her hands, and beating her bosom, exclaimed, "Oh, God! I was inno-

cent once! but now——" added she, striking her hands against her forehead during a breathless pause, "now—alas!" she continued, starting from her seat on the bed beside Erina, and precipitating herself towards the door of the outward cabin, against which she leaned, hiding her face in both her hands, "now, alas!" she groaned, dropping her clasped hands, and wringing them, "I am—incapable of praying!"

"I will pray for you, then," cried Erina. Then dropping on her knees, she ejaculated, "Heaven have mercy on thee as on me!"

"Oh! I deserve not such kindness!" sighed the dreadfully agitated creature, throwing herself into a chair, in a burst of hysteric sobs; during which she said, in the interval of her cries, "You are indeed an angel! and I am——no matter what—— the dreadful day of retribution will declare how very a wretch I am."

Erina, meanwhile having ended an orison, rose from her knees perfectly tranquillized by prayer; which was an act, she believed, requisite on the occasion, to shew her fellow creatures an outward testimony of her confidence, belief, and dependance on the Ruler of the world, who reigned in

her heart, and she resigned her soul to the decrees of Providence.

Seating herself beside Zeleida on the table in the outward cabin, she calmly watched the progress of the storm, prepared to meet an instantaneous death either from the quivering lightnings, armed with the dart of mortal dissolution, or by plunging into eternity in a watery grave. With her thoughts fixed on Heaven, in pious faith and humble hope, she gave a farewell sigh to the remembrance of those she yet tenderly loved on earth; and, interceding for the pardon of the Deity for her enemies and persecutors, she felt peace stealing on her soul as a foretaste of everlasting happiness, which the most terrifically boisterous tempest of the world she believed herself leaving, could not disturb. The pealing thunder, the forked lightning, the beating rain, the roaring whirlwind, the bellowing surges, the sounds of horror uttering distress, ceased to discompose her spirit; and with the abyss of eternity yawning, as she fancied, to receive her, a pleasing awe seemed to absorb and immortalize her mind, and serene her soul, amidst the wreck of nature.

By slow degrees the storm sudsided, the black clouds dispersed, and the dawn broke in calmness

on a brightening morn. With resignation, rather than pleasure, she marked the lessening tempest, and the day rising in unclouded brilliancy. It was the will of her Creator to spare her life, and she received the dispensation of consummate wisdom with gratitude, as a blessing, though in the similitude of a dreadful misfortune: and, although she might have wished to die, and be at peace "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary find repose," Erina was contented to live, because it pleased God she should, notwithstanding she believed her days prolonged for the most direful events and shocking misery.

Erina's companion, composed by the returning calm, dressed herself, and solicited her to change her clothes, offering every article from her own wardrobe; which Erina declined, equally from motives of spirit and delicacy, that made her shrink from the idea of wearing the dress of a woman, whose character was her detestation. Preferring, therefore, to keep on her damp apparel, she took her station at one of the windows, and with a breaking heart and tearful eyes, she watched the rapid progress of the vessel to her horrid destination, by the swift changing of the landscapes that bordered the river. Sometimes she passed banks overgrown with close wood, that dipped down to

the water, and seemed the haunts of savage beasts; at other parts, human habitations cheered the view with appearances of social comfort and rich cultivation. As the prospects were quite new to Erina, she judged that she was proceeding up the river. The detested de l'Armencour was also up the country. Her heart beat with tremendous violence, and she felt almost suffocated with the emotions that rose in her bosom amidst the horrible confusion of distracting thoughts.

The elegant breakfast of tea, coffee, and chocolate, which seemed to recruit the strength and spirits of her thoroughly despised fellow passenger, did not tempt the melancholy girl to eat more than what she judged absolutely necessary to support the existence she felt it a duty to preserve, as long as it might be the will of Heaven she should live.

Wretched and disconsolate, she passed the tedious melancholy day in vain regret, and frightful anticipation of increasing misery; and, whilst heart-rending reflections of past joys and future horrors crowded on her agonizing mind, she sometimes found relief from bursting anguish in a flood of tears. She neither deigned to address nor look at her unknown companion, whose general manner

announced a depravity too habitual to be laid aside even on the morrow of those perils which had awakened a terrific consciousness of criminality. Erina remarked with indescribable disgust that her despairing penitance had passed away with the danger that had called it forth; and shuddering at this representation of human nature, reflected, that *the terrors of conscience come like a sudden storm in the night, and startle infamy from its couch of criminality to horror and a fruitless penitance; but when the mercy of Heaven beams forgiveness in returning sunshine, and gives a reprieve to guilt, it plunges again into fatal forgetfulness in a succession of new crimes, until destruction becomes inevitable!*

Such is the life and such the death of sinners; which is a warning only to the virtuous to beware of the path that leads to perdition.

CHAP. IV.

"As a Supreme Power governs the world, human agents become the instruments of divine vengeance and protection. It may not, therefore, be an error to believe, that the spirit of darkness often tempts in a human form, and that guardian angels frequently prompt mortals to acts of beneficent utility. Consequently, we should shun the temptation of men as that of Satan, and receive the kindness of our fellow-creatures with gratitude to Heaven, as celestial mercy."

AFTER rowing the whole day without intermission, the vessel came in the evening to an increased breadth of river, bordered by a wild and almost desert country, where sandy tracts of ground stretched as far as the sight could reach, and no habitation, except a few miserable mud huts, cheered the eye. The view struck additional melancholy on Erina's heart. Fixing her swimming eyes on the barren waste around, she was seated

in a corner of the cabin, beside the weeping Zeleida, whilst their three female fellow-passengers, after dinner, were seeking in sound sleep that repose, which the storm of the preceding night had rendered desirable, when the entrance of a black boy with a plate of fruit, roused the attention of Erina.

Whilst at breakfast and dinner she had forced herself to eat reluctantly her morsel of sustenance steeped in tears, she had remarked the eyes of this boy rivetted on her, with an expression of tender pity and regard, which consoled her. He was apparently about fourteen; his features were regular; his countenance, open and lively, was animated with a look of keen intelligence, and spoke sweet sentiments of beneficence, as he gazed on Erina, and occasionally turned his attention from her to the weeping Zeleida. The commiseration he evinced for the prisoners, rendered him interesting to them; and as trivial circumstances have frequently a wonderfully powerful effect on acute sensibility, Erina's received a strong impression of regard for this engagingly assiduous attendant; because she had heard him called Albion, and he was habited in the military dress, which was made in the fanciful manner of a hussar uniform.

The look with which he now cautiously slipped into the cabin, as if he had been anxiously watching an opportunity of addressing Erina to serve her, heightened her regard for this benevolent being, and she received with a smile of gratitude the plate of fruit, which he presented to her with a profound obeisance, that spoke a faithful attachment.

This offering consisted of some plantains, a few guavas, and a custard-apple; and whilst she divided the gift in silence with Zeleida to tempt her to eat, Erina tasted one of the plantains, to oblige the amiable Albion, who stood as if in waiting on her.

Turning a meaning glance towards the inner cabin, where his mistress and her two female attendants lay in a sleep, which, from the manner of breathing, seemed profound, he approached Erina, and dropping on one knee close beside her, he said, in a whisper, "You, good lady, Albion serve with all his heart! My *missess* bad, I no love."

To this touching address, Erina, again smiling her thanks through her tears, expressed her gratitude in the language of the country; fearful of exposing Albion to the displeasure of his mistress,

if she should overhear a conversation, in which Erina was aware her attendant would not spare her character. Desirous of fully investigating her situation, and in hopes of learning what was planned against her, and of, perhaps, avoiding her ruin by the assistance of her new friend, the amiable girl felt herself authorized to enquire into the private affairs of her seductress, and avail herself of an opportunity to bribe a domestic to her aid, even against his fidelity to his employers; because the nefarious machination for her destruction could not, she felt assured, be otherwise counteracted in her present situation.

To a number of questions, which Erina put to Albion in the Hindoo language, she only received this reply: "No talk Moors."

At the request of her companion, Zeleida now spoke Bengaleese to him, in hopes that the boy might understand that dialect, and through the medium of an interpreter, hold an intercourse with Erina, more satisfactory to all parties concerned in the conversation than any that could be maintained in English; which, she had remarked, was scarcely intelligible to Albion, even in the short sentences of commands addressed to him at table by his mistress.

To the extreme disappointment and grief of Zeleida and Erina, Albion declared his total ignorance of Bengaleese by a shake of his head, and a wave of his hand, which he accompanied by this laconic sentence: "Malabar my country."

Compelled now to address the boy in English, Erina felt dispirited at the reflection, how difficult, perhaps impossible, it might be for her to make herself understood by Albion; how much at a loss she might be to comprehend his meaning; and how impracticable it must therefore be to concert with him any feasible mode of executing the elopement which she meditated, whatever risks or perils she should incur in the attempt to liberate herself out of the power into which she had been enthralled. However, after infinite pains to frame her speech to the comprehension of her new friend, with extreme attention on his part, and great exertion of patience, ingenuity, penetration, and extraordinary expence of time and thought, Erina, by the aid of significant signs (with which she had remarked the Asiatics in general denote and discover a variety of meanings in silent gesticulation), she believed she had learned all that was necessary for her to know relative to her distressful situation; in finding, by a frequent repetition of her own whispered sentences, and the monosylla-

ble answers of Albion to her interrogations, that his mistress was the wife of an English gentleman, who lived at Bombay, and who had purchased him on the Malabar coast for a slave; that his master had parted from her, on account of her infamous conduct and infidelity to him; and that since she had left Bombay with a French lover, whom she soon quitted: after her arrival at Chandenagore, she was visited as a public courtesan, and maintained herself by profligacy. Erina further learned by a train of questions, to which Albion's information led, that de l'Amencour had been one of her most assiduous attendants; that she had even lived with him as his mistress during the confinement occasioned by his wounds; had accompanied him in his passage up the country; and having left him at a house which he had hired in an Indian town, on the banks of the Ganges, she came down the river in his barge, to decoy her prisoner away; which, having successfully performed, she immediately ordered the budgerow back the same course it came, and was now hastening to the place, where the count waited her return, and where they would arrive on the following morning.

This shocking intelligence, infinitely clearer, and more circumstantial, than Erina had hoped or be-

lieved it possible she could have acquired, corroborated all her fears, and rendered certainty of disgrace and wretchedness more insupportable than the agonizing suspicion of what would probably be her fate. To anticipate her delivery on the morrow, in a few short hours, into the possession of an atheistical libertine, by the licentious partner of and pander to his vices; to live, even for a day, the associate of infamy; to be the pity of virtue, perhaps the scorn of profligacy; but, above all, to become an object of her own abhorrence—it was too much; distraction accompanied the maddening thoughts, which set her brain on fire; and gasping, from suffocated respiration, Erina wildly started from her seat, and flinging open the Venetian window near her chair, she cast her maniac glances on the watery abyss below, with a confusion of intellect, that made her blood run icy cold with horror undefined.

"Happy, thrice happy," ejaculated the frantic girl, clasping her hands, and covering her eyes from the departing light, now fading into dun shades of twilight, "happy," she repeated with vehemence, which sunk into deep tones of sadness, that modulated each accent with sounds expressive of despair, "happy the poor Hindoo, who, in the hour of dissolution, breathes his last peaceful sigh, with-

out one fear or struggle, on these waves, which, flowing from the Ganges' stream, he fancies sacred; and smiling, dies in hopes of rest from mortal woe, and future bliss, because this river laves his clay-cold limbs, from which his spirit takes its flight! Alas! surely, without sin, I may lament I dare not seek in this watery grave, now ready to receive me, a refuge from deceit, from cruelty, from ignominy, and despair!" Erina looked on the fugitive stream of the river till her head grew giddy with the tumult of her ideas; a wild confusion of nameless inexplicable thoughts crouded on her bewildered fancy, and seemed to press upon her aching brain and bursting heart; a violent dizziness appeared to obscure her reason, as it depressed her senses; and, almost in a state of phrenzy, she hailed expected madness, with a maniac smile, as an anodyne of woe.

Erina remained some time in a state of ideal insanity, with her eyes closed, to exclude all objects round her from her view. In this pause of reason, intellect, ever busy in its ceaseless office of reminiscence and foreseeing, presented in review to her imagination her parents, brother, and every friend she most loved, embodied, as it were, to mental vision, by fond remembrance. "Soon," thought Erina, "all will be washed away by tears

of melancholy from my recollection; no idea of those I tenderly regard, will bring them to my fancy; my memory will become a waste, like the sandy desert; and frantic passions, uncontrouled by understanding, will rage infuriate, like savage beasts; and passing moments will obliterate each unconnected thought from my desolated mind, as the sweeping wind scatters the dust of a barren wilderness, imprinted with the mark of the hasty and solitary traveller's course through its desert wilds." Scalding tears dropped from Erina's burning eyes as this reflection passed through her mind. Affectionate even to enthusiasm, notwithstanding her heart was torn with anguish; and pious, though her soul was scarcely in possession of its faculties, she gave a sigh to past scenes of domestic and social endearment; and feeling, that she was not only bidding a last adieu to every tie her soul held dear, but that she was taking a farewell of her intellectual powers, she thought it a duty incumbent on her, to spend her last rational moments in addressing herself to her Creator in prayer, as if upon her death-bed. Erina would have shuddered at this death of reason, at this horrible decay of the mental faculties, had she not considered, that their derangement would spare her torments, a million times more dreadful than lingering death, namely, that of living to conscious

ignominy. About to drop into an intellectual death, a temporary annihilation of soul, without a hope of really dying, and thus obtaining an immediate release to regions of purity and peace, Erina felt her heart more agonized, than if the bonds which unite the soul and body were tearing asunder with the most excruciating pains of dissolution; and she felt not only the duty, but the necessity of prayer, at this tremendously awful moment. Bidding a mental adieu to her native land and paternal home, her remembrance presented at one view to her imagination, her grandsire, mother, brother, Rosaline, Seraphina, Wilmot, and the amiable prince. On the recollection of that admirable being, who, at the hazard of his life, had stepped between her and destruction, she felt her heart particularly moved. "Dear and admirable youth," she mentally cried, in tender thought, "I can no longer indulge the hope, that thy guardian care will hover round me. No! thou art far off! I willed our eternal separation, else——" Erina's ideas paused, to feel a pang of anguish; yet she felt she ought not, she could not regret a conduct regulated by notions of propriety and christian duty, whatever the consequences might be of adhering to the dictates of conscience. Long did her thoughts linger on an affectionate remembrance of the prince, whilst she fervently prayed for his

conversion. She also prayed for the happiness of all she loved. In this recollection, gratitude forgot not to include all to whom obligation attached her: Madame du Beaumanoir, de Briançon, her loved Seraphina's parents, who had acted so generously and kindly to her brother, were remembered with particular affection, and recommended to the care of Heaven. The domestics who had nursed Erina in infancy, she also thought of with tender emotions; and Denis, M'Shane, and Norah, were commended to Providence, with her good attendant Silvia, and her faithful companion Zeleida. Nor was her new friend Albion forgotten either by her affection or gratitude. Whilst Erina's soul soared to Heaven on the wings of pious intercession for herself and those she loved, and even for her enemies, she raised her swimming eyes to the firmament. The day had closed in the shades of night, and through the unclouded sky, the glittering planets, beaming radiance, and sparkling stars, the effulgent suns of other systems, with the silver crescent, whose argentine rays diffuse soft lustre on the globe it monthly circles,—all proclaimed to Erina's soul the care of Heaven; and religion's voice whispered peace to her mind, and assured her faith, that invisible angels guard the innocence that piously solicits and trusts in the Creator's protection.

Erina remembered with thankfulness, how she had been preserved from her infancy till that moment; how often, within the short period of the last year of her life, she had been miraculously snatched from imminent perils by unexpected assistance, and not only unforeseen, but most extraordinary means; and whilst she devoutly blessed Heaven for all its late care, sent in the form of human interference, she felt it impious and impossible to despair of the goodness so often and so recently experienced.

Tranquillized by religious reliance on divine aid, she turned a calm look on Albion, who still kept his station near her. "Surely," thought Erina, as she gazed on the sweet benevolence and anxious solicitude that played over his intelligent countenance, on which the moon shone full and brightly, "surely some guardian angel prompts this innocent spirit to relieve me!" Thinking this, she smiled on her attentive observer; who thus addressed her, in a low interrogatory whisper: "Albion run away, you run away too?"

To this pertinent, though laconic question, Erina nodded a smiling assent; and Albion taking her hand, and putting it to his heart, said, "I take care, great care of lady!" Then to this

short profession, rendered unspeakably eloquent by the animated expression of his looks as well as gesture, he added an oath of fidelity by a silent obeisance.

Erina, equally affected and delighted at this touching incident of miraculous Providence, almost visibly, as it were, protecting and consoling her by the intervention of a human agent, believed the innocent soul of Albion inspired by a divine intelligence for her rescue; and she was devising within herself a mode of escape, and was about to concert a plan for it with her two Asiatic companions, when Albion was summoned by his mistress, who had just shaken off her sleep, to prepare some tea.

Disconcerted and distressed as Erina was at this unlucky interruption, she resolved to be patient, not doubting the divine protection. Had not this consolatory trust composed her, she could not have supported herself as the moments and hours passed on rapid wing to the succeeding morning, when the vessel, still hastening in its course, would arrive at the dreadful place wickedness had fixed for the destruction of her innocence. As the evening wore away, she reflected with anxiety on her situation: she must fly that night,

or face ruin on the morrow in the most horrid form.

Her seductress, sensible that her prisoner's penetration must have discovered the infamy of which she felt conscious, not only by her conduct towards herself, in thus decoying her from friends, but also from what the terrors of the preceding night's storm had extorted as a confession of guilt, felt it needless to attempt to keep up appearances of decorum, which habits of vice had rendered irksome: she therefore neither endoavoured to conciliate Erina's good opinion, nor addressed her with the politeness she had employed on the foregoing evening, to allure the unhappy victim into toils set for her destruction; on the contrary, conscious that the mask had been torn off, she took not the trouble to resume even a veil to hide the boldness natural to her, appearing in true and glaring colours, the shameless and abandoned creature a course of infamy had made her. Awed by Erina's chilling aspect towards her, into that distance which conscious depravity made her feel necessary, as the just forfeit of guilt, she dared not even look at the modest girl; and by maintaining a guarded reserve whenever circumstances obliged her to address her prisoner, she felt, from experience, that the most hardened vice feels abashed in the pre-

sence of virtue; and proved to Erina, that the most impudent infamy shrinks from the observation of innocence, and thus pays an involuntary homage to modesty and worth.

Rejoiced at being thus unmolested by her depraved companion, the pensive girl took her station at one of the windows in the back cabin, and watched the crescent declining from her view: before it sunk beneath the horizon, its beams displayed the country on the river's banks increasing in beauty; and when the nocturnal planet no longer spread her silvery radiance, to adorn the shifting scenes Erina's quick passage presented, her sight, still lingering on the darkening prospects with an anxious gaze, caught transient glimpses of light shining from human habitations, thickly scattered on each border of the river; which, from its wide stream, she judged to be the Ganges, whose copious current dividing, seeks the main by various channels, and gives a portion of its waters to the full-flowing Hoogley. The wide expanse of tide soon increasing to an extent which seemed an ocean, struck Erina with equal terror and admiration. She had often longed to see the majestic Ganges, whose fame reaches to distant shores over the sea, which is supplied by its numerous tributary streams; but, alas! under what circumstances

did she now behold that glorious river! Driven by cruel persecution, an exile from her country, and now torn by villany from the last remains of security, peace, and friendship, to be the prey of wanton profligacy—to be the associate of infamy—to be what she dared not name, nor even think of!

These reflections threw a chill of despair over Erina's mind; the widened river seemed a new barrier to her escape; and although sensible of her folly in giving rein to her imagination, to conceive the execution of impossibilities as probable, she almost believed it might have been practicable for her to have gained the shore of the Hoogley, by dropping out of the window with Zeleida, and swimming to land unperceived by her gaoler; but to plunge into the sea of the wide-spreading rapid-flowing Ganges, whose tide flowed like an ocean, she knew must be inevitable death, and that consequently it would be suicide to attempt it.

Whilst absorbed in this reflection, Albion summoned her to supper; but unheedful of even his voice, Erina with Zeleida still kept their mournful station of melancholy observation in the inner cabin; whilst their seductress, rejoicing in her guests' absence from the supper-table, sent her portion

into the next cabin, at Albion's suggestion; who, in his office of attendant on Erina and Zeleida, whispered to the former, "Run away to night, lady, by and by."

Persuaded that her honest young friend was incapable of deceiving her, and convinced he was too shrewd not to have some ground to believe the execution of his project feasible, Erina encouraged hope of her promised speedy release; and taking some refreshment, to support her strength and spirits for the venturesome undertaking, being resolved to effect her escape at any hazard, she induced Zeleida to eat also, by the same reasons which had suggested to herself the necessity of taking more sustenance than she had done since her thraldom.

It was not without disgust, notwithstanding she imagined it would facilitate the meditated escape, that she observed her abandoned hostess plunging into the same excess of intemperate drinking, which, on the preceding night, had rendered her almost senseless, and extremely torpid. Less guarded, and consequently more unrestrained, she exceeded her former intemperance, and soon after supper was so little mistress of her reason as to prefer wine to rest. Her attendants, in the meanwhile,

left her to her debauchery: the male domestics quitted the cabin, after replenishing a decanter; and her two black girls, accustomed to similar occurrences, lay down to indulge their drowsiness in sleep, knowing their mistress would not soon retire to bed.

With inconceivable horror, Erina witnessed the disgrace of her sex till a late hour; when, overpowered with excess, her gaoler, incapable of thought, and almost of motion, threw herself on her bed, without locking, barring, or even closing the outward cabin door, which led to the deck of the vessel.

The bargemen, in the meanwhile, ran the budgerow up a narrow creek, where they moored, for the first time in their passage; and Erina, who had left the sleeping-cabin to her disgusting companion, heard the Moors say to each other, that being worn out with the fatigue of continual rowing for such a length of time, they might safely all take the rest they required, without any necessity for setting a watch. Rejoiced at this equally welcome and unexpected intelligence, Erina and Zeleida believed it an intervention of Providence for their rescue; and falling on their knees, beside each other, they offered up their thanksgivings for

the unforeseen mercy of their present unlooked for situation, and united in an intercession for a blessing on their meditated escape; praying devoutly for divine support and protection, in an undertaking, which, at best, must present much difficulty, and even danger: for the barge was moored some distance from shore, which, on both sides of the creek, presented a wild view of thickets at a distance, without any sign of human dwellings.

Whilst the two pious beings were at their devotions, all the crew went to rest. Some retired below deck, and the other boatmen, consisting of the second watch, instead of keeping their station at the oars, as they had done alternately on the preceding night, wrapped themselves up in their garments, and laying down on the deck, sleep soon visited their weary eyelids.

All now was hushed around, and nothing disturbed the repose of placid nature, which seemed to slumber in the bosom of tranquil night. The smooth water of the creek, unruffled by a breath of wind, reflected on its glassy surface the clear expanse of an unclouded sky, glittering with stars, which shot their twinkling radiance through space that seemed immeasurable. As Erina and Zeleida, at an open window, threw their gaze up to the

sparkling firmament, and beheld the planets moving in their orbits, at the command of that Great Power which created and sustains the unbounded universe, their souls felt a confidence, that the Almighty Being, who loves virtue, and hates vice, would protect innocence against the machinations of wickedness; and their trust in Providence calmed each rising fear of surrounding evils and dangers.

Whilst thus pondering in secret soliloquy, and occasional addresses to each other, their attention was aroused by the cautious entrance of Albion; who, faithful to the trust he had endeavoured to inspire, and to the care with which he had voluntarily charged himself, came to give notice, that the opportunity was now favourable for the projected escape out of a detested situation.

The loud breathing of the sleepers in the cabin inspired security against their either listening to, or being disturbed by a gentle whisper; and Albion approaching Erina, thus addressed her: "I run away just now; lady come too—nobody see—all sleep."

Without asking her conductor any questions relative to his intended mode of effecting her

escape, she followed him on deck, leading the timid Zeleida with her. All was now still as solitude and midnight could make it: no light was visible, except that of the brilliant stars shining through clear ether unshadowed by a single cloud; and by the rays emitted from the splendid constellations of the torrid zone, where the whole heavens are seen from the northern to the southern pole, the serene azure of the sky was seen illumined with lustre of various hues darted from orbs of unreflected brightness; those stars, those suns of distant systems, which reason tells us must exist; those living gems of heaven, that sparkle with internal radiance, and write the power of their great Creator in characters of ever glowing fire in the ethereal dome of space illimitable, were multiplied on the tranquil surface of the waters round the barge, which seemed to float upon effulgent waves. By these lights, darted through ambient air, and reflected on the liquid mirror around, the cordage, that attached the vessel to a stake in the creek, was easily discovered; and as Albion cut the knot asunder that held the budgerow safely moored, Erina's heart palpitated with the mingled emotions of joy and fear, hope and expectation. Having in a moment dexterously shoved the vessel close to the bank with an oar, which he used as a punting pole in the shallow creek, he assisted

his two female charges to land; and having leaped out of the barge, he was about to fly instantly from it, and leave it adrift, when Erina's presence of mind and christian kindness, instantly suggested to her the danger that might ensue to the passengers by the bark's being committed to chance, which might carry it out into the rapid current of the Ganges to be wrecked. Instantaneously as this idea rushed through her fancy, she flew to the edge of the shelving bank, and with a sudden effort, which the benevolent energy of her soul inspired, she seized hold of the budgerow, at the imminent peril of being dragged into the water; which would soon have happened, probably to her inevitable destruction, had not the faithful and intelligent Albion sprung to save her from the danger, that threatened not only the loss of her liberty, but her life. Conceiving immediately her kind intention of securing the vessel, he leaped on board, and having found a coil of rope, he tied one end of it to the prow, and bounding on the bank, he attached the budgerow to a palm-tree.

Erina, who stood near her good attendant, with an intention of assisting him in his work, perceived that Albion had brought a large scimiter with him from the vessel, and, demanding if it were his property, was answered in the negative. The being

privy to a theft without preventing it, if possible, would have made Erina condemn herself as an accomplice in the robbery; and, endeavouring to make Albion sensible of the criminality of stealing any thing, even of the least value, she insisted on his restoring the scimiter whence he had taken it, notwithstanding his earnest solicitation that she would permit him to retain the weapon for her defence. The poor boy's morality consisted in following the impulse of a nature not yet corrupted by the world; his ideas of vice and virtue were very undetermined; and, feeling a powerful inclination to guard the lovely being whom he had pledged his word to protect, he would have considered every mode of fulfilling his promise justifiable: ignorant of the sublime doctrines of christianity, he comprehended not immediately the principle of honesty Erina wished to impress upon his mind; and it was with some difficulty he was prevailed on to relinquish the scimiter, and replace it where he had found it, near one of the attendants in the budgerow.

Having, however, exacted this act of obedience, Erina, and her two young Asiatic companions, with cautious and trembling steps, pursued a pathway, into which they struck near the bank of the creek, in hopes this beaten track might lead them

to some place of human habitation. As they advanced towards the thickets, which at a distance marked the horizon with a sable shade, the hideous yell of jackals burst on their ears in horrible and dismal discord, and raised in their frightened fancy the shape of every savage beast that nightly prowls the woods for prey. Erina believed herself approaching the wild forests and jungles of that country where the cruel tiger lurks amidst close umbrageous coverts, and, scenting his living food from far, darts in the dark with certain aim and desperate fangs upon his unsuspecting victim. Imagination, now alarmed to every terrific expectation, rung in fancy's ear the tremendous roar of each infuriated beast, and shrieks of human horror, mingled with the piercing cries that nearly deafened her, although no nearer than the distant thickets. Stopping in her flight, Erina paused:—then, turning her fearful glances from the dark woods, she caught a glimpse of the creek and distant Ganges gleaming in the star-light. Distressed and irresolute whether to pursue her way towards the wide-stretched forest, or linger in the open country near the river, until the appearance of dawn might lessen the terror and peril of seeking the woody coverts for concealment, the timid girl took counsel from her friends. Albion, urging her to the woods, lamented the scimiter he had relin-

quished, and made his companions understand he feared no wild beast as he feared his mistress; adding emphatically, "Tiger kill me, I die, then go to my country—Misses catch me, beat poor Albion, then keep me always;" and concluded this pathetic speech with a deep sigh, that made the gentle Erina's tender heart melt at the idea of slavery.

"You shall be free, my good Albion," cried the amiable girl, "yes, my poor friend, you shall be legally so; if I can purchase thy emancipation, it will be an obligation on me to bestow on thee perfect freedom, as thy services have endeavoured to bestow that blessing on me."

Poor Albion did not understand the full purport of this ejaculatory address which Erina's enthusiasm prompted her to utter, as much for her own gratification as her faithful attendant's satisfaction, to increase which she tried to explain to him her intentions respecting him, that gratitude and justice had suggested to her feeling nature. The poor boy, who was a docile pupil of virtue, regarded Erina as the most admirable being in existence, and explained to her he wanted no other freedom but to live and die her servant.

Afraid of lingering near the creek, as the hours were towards dawn, the fugitives drew nearer the thickets, whence the dismal howling of the jackals without intermission kept the terrors of imagination awake. At length they caught a glimpse of a distant light glimmering through the shades of a detached plantation, whither they directed their course, in hopes of finding a human dwelling; but, on reaching the grove, they found it surrounded a Hindoo pagoda, where idolatrous ignorance nightly kept a lamp burning before a hideous idol, which, from the arched entrance, ever open, appeared horribly monstrous by the glare thrown over its half-human, half-bestial form. Distressed as Erina was for shelter, she joyfully hailed the light which issued from this heathen temple, and approached the edifice, where the cheerful beams of the lamp spread a consolatory influence through the shades around, by chasing darkness thence, and inspiring a confidence that the spot thus sanctified to worship was near some human habitation, and that consequently the adjacent woods were not wild jungles, but cultivated plantations.

Erina's thin habiliments were wet with the heavy falling dew that hung in glistening drops from each leaf of the grove, and stood empearled on every blade of grass. Uncomfortable as she

felt it to be thus exposed to the damps of night, she could not bring herself to take shelter within the pagoda, aware that the proprietors of this devotional edifice would consider it, and perhaps themselves, polluted by her having entered the place which was hallowed to them. Erina ever carried in her recollection the code of christian laws, which the constant perusal of the sacred writings had imprinted in her memory; and she never transgressed the duties she revered as sacred. By the sublime injunctions of the pure principles of christianity, she endeavoured to regulate every action of her life to the spirit of that benevolence and philanthropy which is truly divine; and strictly abiding by the commandant so enforced throughout the gospel, of loving her neighbour as herself, and doing unto all men as she would they should do unto her, she ever regarded the virtuous of all countries as her neighbour, and never offended any being.

The kind-hearted Albion, delighted to have reached this shelter, and more anxious for the convenience of his female companions than for his individual ease, urged Erina and Zeleida to enter the pagoda for safety, and was much concerned to find them averse to a proposition of taking their station within this edifice. Erina, ever inflexible

in whatever propriety and conscientious considerations determined to be right, resolved not to permit selfish motives to tempt her to take a secret advantage, which it would have pained her to commit, as a species of deception on the mild and benevolent Hindoos. She therefore resolved to take her seat on the smooth washed clay before the archway of the pagoda until the morning, when she knew the religious zeal of the devotee to whom the care of this Gentoo sanctuary was committed, would come at the break of day to perform offices he considered sacred: and she felt infinite satisfaction in the reflection, that she should be able to assure the zealot she had abstained from violating the temple near which she had sought refuge.

Zeleida knew, that as a christian she also would be interdicted the spot; and therefore remained unsheltered with Erina and Albion, from motives of delicacy and integrity, of which the conduct of her instructress afforded her such a beautifully attractive example.

With diminished apprehension of being beset by wild beasts, or falling into the power of their equally ferocious guard from whom they were flying, the fugitives passed the night listening attentively to each sound that stole on their retreat,

where every leaf that trembled in the whispering zephyr awakened an idea of surprisal. As the eastern horizon assumed a dappled light that foretold the approach of dawn, Erina heard a footstep advancing with measured tread; and whilst she gazed around in fearful expectation of beholding a pursuer, who might have traced them from the bank of the creek to their hiding place, by their steps in the sandy path, she saw a venerable Bramin reach the spot where she sat before the pagoda.

The instant he perceived those whom he feared might have been sacrilegious intruders on the shrine of his adoration, he stopped and cast a severe look on Erina and her companions, who immediately rose and saluted him with that respect which amiable youth ever pays to the grey hairs of advanced years. The old man returned the obeisance with grave courtesy; and Erina, approaching him in an attitude of intercession, assured him, that although distressed for shelter, wearied by fatigue, and apprehensive of being seized by cruelly wicked pursuers, or wild beasts, yet neither she nor her companions had dared to profane the temple of his devotion by drawing nearer to it than he saw them. There was an air of virtue in Erina that stamped all she said with the seal of truth,

which, added to the charm of youth, appealed to the affectionate regard of all who beheld her; and the ancient Bramin, convinced of her innocence and sincerity, smiled on her with paternal interest.

"Daughter," said he, addressing her, "I believe thee amiable as thou seemest. Wherefore dost thou, in inexperienced youth, wander thus far from thy friends and home, to this solitude, seldom visited by any traveller of thy sex and nation? Thy speech proclaims thee unhappy as thou art young and lovely. Tell me thy griefs, and all the comfort an aged Bramin can bestow on a stranger, his care will endeavour to afford thee."

Delighted with the benevolence of his address, and his venerable aspect, Erina related her unfortunate situation in as concise a manner as possible. She was not much at a loss to express herself in the Hindoo language. Sensibility made her eloquent, and the seer had feeling to compassionate her distress. Assuring her he would do all in his power to relieve her, he paid his adoration at the pagoda; and requesting Erina and her companions to accompany him to a neighbouring village, where he promised them a safe asylum, and protection against their enemies, in case any pursuers

came in quest of them, the venerable sage led the way to the woods as the morning broke.

The thick grove surrounding the temple screened them completely from being perceived by any one whom the dawn might have awakened in the budgerow. Erina flattered herself the sleepers in the cabin would not be disturbed at that early hour; and that consequently neither she nor her fugitive companions would be soon missed out of the vessel: and she hoped to gain the promised asylum before any person who might be dispatched in quest of her, could discover her in the devious intricacies of the forest intersected with innumerable winding paths.

The sun was just rising in its brightest splendour as her conductor led her into the mazes of this woody retreat. Mango trees, in full blossom, scented the air, and Erina breathed fragrance exhaling from the umbrageous foliage around her as she passed along, brushing the spangling dewdrops from every spray; whilst the music of the groves burst in varied harmony on her ear, and elevated her soul on adoration's wing to the celestial throne, whence unnumbered blessings are continually showered on man, too often ungrateful for the rich gifts of nature.

As Erina pursued her way with her three Asiatic companions through shadowy brakes, impervious to the sun-beams, the heat of rising day was tempered by zephyrs, which, fluttering amongst the thickly interwoven branches of the inmost recesses of the forest, scattered coolness from the dewy freshness that breathed around.

The old Bramin's sage remarks beguiled the length of way, and the sun had already mounted high in his course, when the three youthful travellers reached the village to which their conductor led them for safety and repose, until a messenger might be dispatched to Chandenagore, to bring friends to conduct them thither.

This hamlet consisted of some mud huts and several mat cottages, built round an extensive tank, or piece of water, in an opening of the forest. Each dwelling was overhung with trees; and the satin-leaved plantains, spreading their pale green floating branches, mingled with the dark verdure of the large papaws, under the tall palms, cocoa-nuts, and date trees, whose slender pliant stems and waving tops contrasted beautifully with the wide branching banian, tamarind, almond, and jack, interspersed amongst inclosures of flowering shrubs, and vegetables for culinary use, gave such a picturesque

effect to the rural scene, as to render it uncommonly charming. The wide expanse of water, of an irregular form, was beautifully clear, and in some parts of its lucent bosom the lotus, or water lily, flourished in all the luxuriance of wild vegetation; whilst the fanciful and various habits of the natives, some of whom were reclining on mats before their habitations, smoking, eating, or reading, with their children sporting in groups around, and the females busied in domestic occupations, either spinning, cooking, nursing their infants, or washing in the open air, formed a view equally interesting as it was amusing, and afforded the most pleasing ideas of an Arcadian life.

Erina's appearance instantly gathered round her a crowd of both sexes and all ages, to whom the Bramin related the particulars of her story as she had recounted it to him.

Benevolence on all sides welcomed the strangers to this retreat of peaceful retirement, where they were assured hospitality and friendship would exert their utmost efforts to entertain them most kindly, and protect them most faithfully. —To these professions, Erina and Zeleida, smiling, made their acknowledgments with many expressions of courteous gratitude; and,

with the venerable Bramin and their delighted attendant, Albion repaired to the dwelling of a Hindoo family of the first consequence in the place, at the polite invitation of the master.

He was a man advanced in life, of a noble air, and whose countenance, dress, and language announced him to be a character of amiability and some rank.

His habitation, concealed by a surrounding grove within a high fence, was built with brick, plaistered and whitewashed; and, in the Eastern style, spread its arcades round three sides of a square, in the midst of which a fountain streamed translucent water into a wide bason, over which a pavilion was erected at one end. Into this pavilion the host introduced his guests, and ordered refreshments to be served. On the floor was spread a mat, delicately fine and smooth as satin, on which the entertainer seated himself in the Indian mode; and Erina, readily accommodating herself to the manners of the country, sat on the ground, and partook with Zeleida of some rice and milk, with several kinds of sweetmeats quite new to her, that were recommended to her equally by their novelty and excellence.

After this Asiatic repast, of which Albion partook a part, Erina's host conversed with her and the aged Bramin, on the subject of her situation; and, pressing her to take some repose immediately, to recruit her after the uncomfortable and painful watching of the preceding night, he withdrew, in company with her venerable conductor, whom he invited to take some refreshment in the interior of his house; and, expressing his concern that he could not accommodate his strange visitor within his dwelling, as his religion forbad his receiving Christians in his inner apartments, he assured Erina he would send female attendants to prepare the pavilion for her repose; during which he would consult with the Bramin respecting the best mode of rendering her situation secure, until her friends were apprised of it.

Erina had suffered so much from uneasiness of mind and fatigue, that she readily consented to seek the rest of which she stood so much in need; and, paying her kind conductor and hospitable host those grateful acknowledgments she felt their due, for the great proofs of their generous friendship towards a wandering stranger, she returned their parting salutations, expressing a hope she should not long trespass on their kindness.

Albion was desired to retire to a part of the house, where, amongst the domestics, he might take some sleep ; and two Gentoo women immediately brought carpets and coverings, of which they made two beds, sufficiently commodious to tempt the wearied fugitives to a repose, which security rendered tranquil. Assured of protection, Erina thanked Providence for her deliverance, which nearly appeared to her miraculous; and, after a devout recommendation of herself to Almighty care, sleep closed her eyelids with a reflection, that, *as a Supreme Power governs the world, human agents become the instruments of Divine vengeance and protection. It may not therefore be an error to believe, that the spirit of darkness often tempts in a human form, and that guardian angels frequently prompt mortals to acts of beneficent utility. Consequently, we should shun the temptation of men as that of Satan, and receive the kindness of our fellow-creatures with gratitude to Heaven, as celestial mercy.*

CHAP. V.

"Beneficence is lovely; kindness is an angelic disposition; and charity is the most amiable quality of human nature, and the only one in which man can imitate the Divinity. Benevolence to our fellow-creatures alone entitles us to celestial mercy. Affection to our friends, although a duty of high importance, is too natural to be meritorious; but to love our enemies, to be kind to those who persecute us, and to do good to those who grievously sin against us, is the highest exertion of virtue, as it is the most difficult thing to follow in this, as we are bound, the command and example of him, who became a sacrifice for transgressors, and died on the cross to save his enemies."

AFTER a peaceful and refreshing slumber of several hours, Erina and Zeleida awakened, much restored in strength and spirits.

Their kind host, on polite enquiries, being informed of this, requested permission to pay his personal compliments to his guests after their din-

ner, which was served in the Indian manner, and consisted of several kinds of a savory dish called curry, with rice and an excellent pillaw, besides pickles of various sorts.

Erina gladly granted the audience that had been requested; and, in her interview with her entertainer and the reverend Bramin, it was agreed, as most expedient for her, on various accounts, to set out on the following day at dawn, on her return to Chandenagore, in some convenient conveyance, rather than delay her going to her friends by sending them advice of her situation, and waiting for their coming to accompany her in a journey, which she believed could not be dangerous for her to undertake under the escort of the guard kindly offered by her hospitable entertainer. Every thing relative to her departure on the morrow being settled, the venerable Bramin took his leave, blessing Erina in a solemn and affectionate manner, which extremely affected her.

The remainder of the day was spent in conversation with her host; who exerted every means his fancy could devise to entertain his guests; shewing them his extensive gardens, and ordering jugglers and tumblers with music to perform their tricks and feats; after which, dancing girls acted

a kind of pantomimic interlude in the evening, before the arcades of the house, which was illuminated as for a festival. Mats were spread in the colonnade for the entertainer and his guests, where Erina and Zeleida were extremely amused by the novel and splendid shew, and still more delighted with the courteous urbanity that treated them with such polite attentions. The brilliancy of the illumination, added to the fineness of the night, which displayed each lustrous star that sparkles in the heavens, and rendered the evening crescent particularly effulgent; and the soft zephyrs scattering from their wings the delicious odours breathing from innumerable flowers steeped in dewy freshness, renovated the spirits of Erina and her companion to enjoy the festive scene intended to compliment them; and as a demonstration of their gratitude for the hospitable reception that had thus unexpectedly relieved them from infinite difficulty and danger, they smiled their thanks in all the engaging sweetness of innocence and beauty: and Erina, whom sensibility ever adorned with varied loveliness of enchanting expression of features, complexion, air, and gesture, rivetted the admiring gaze of all present, especially of the females in the Zenana, whom she was permitted to see and converse with through a hanging, made of a kind of fine reed, interwoven with delicate light-

ness, so as to be nearly as transparent as gauze; and behind which, the ladies of her host's numerous family, made a part of the company during the evening until a late hour, when the conclusion of the entertainment allowed every one to retire to supper and repose. Erina and Zeleida's repast consisted of fruits and sweetmeats, which were served for her in the pavilion; where, closing the Venetian windows and the entrance, she slept in peace until the dawn of the morning, when she took her leave of the charming asylum hospitality had afforded her.

Her politely benevolent host rose at break of day to see his visitors depart in safety; and as Erina and Zeleida took their seat in the vehicle that was to convey them from a situation of security, where they had experienced so much pleasing attention, they felt a sensation of regret, notwithstanding the prospect of a speedy return to the bosom of friendship.

The conveyance Erina had chosen for her journey, was denominated a hackery. It was a kind of chariot, closed all round with curtains, and drawn by bullocks. She preferred it as a convenient, though neither an easy nor elegant vehicle, because concealment on the road would be agree-

able, and might be essential to her safety, in case of meeting any of the scouts or daring myrmidons of de l'Armencour, whom he might send in search of her. In this carriage she admitted her faithful attendant Albion, as it was necessary he also should be concealed, lest his being encountered on the road by any person who knew him, should betray him as well as herself to the danger of being pursued, and falling into the possesion of their enemies. A pedestrian guard, on either side of the carriage, well armed, was stationed, with orders not to satisfy the curiosity of any one who might enquire respecting the travellers; who journeyed on peaceably until they came to a kind of village, where the bullocks baited, and where Erina's attendants set about preparing a repast for themselves, whilst she and their companions made their breakfast of rice, milk, and fruits, with which their hospitable host had furnished them.

After this refreshment they again set forward on their route, and had proceeded some way, when the carriage suddenly stopped, and Erina heard the guards and driver in low and earnest consultation; and looking out at the side, where the attendants were speaking in tones of surprise and distress, she perceived them bending over a European, in an officer's dress, who was lying on the ground, to all

appearance lifeless. Instantly believing that it must be her friend de Biançon, who had met an untimely death in seeking her, the terrified girl sprung out of the carriage, and in extreme agony of mind precipitated herself towards the scene of horror, in spite of the shock she experienced from the dreadful sight of a murdered fellow-creature, and one she had a conviction must be her friend, the husband of her beloved Rosaline, and who had met a direful fate on her account.

With a heart torn by anguish, she threw herself on he rknees beside the death-like figure; and, in the features before her, discovered de l'Armencour! A sentiment of abhorrence for her diabolical persecutor, and one of the most infamous of profligates, made Erina turn from the frightful blood-stained object, and covering her eyes with her hands, she started from what she believed the lifeless remains of the man she had so much cause to fear and detest. No selfish sentiment made her rejoice in this deliverance from the wretch, who had repeatedly planned, and nearly effected her destruction; no idea of her own security made her feel pleased, that her wrongs had thus been avenged: the angelic spirit of Erina grieved, that de l'Armencour had died as he had lived, and that he had been thus suddenly and shockingly called to

the dread account of unrepented crimes. Whilst unmindful of her own concerns, she was absorbed in silent lamentation over the miserable fate of her worst enemy, one of the guards informed her, the gentleman shewed some signs of life; but that a wound on his temple was bleeding, and he feared would soon cause death, unless the great discharge of blood were stopped. Erina, who was leaning against a tree for support, as the shock had occasioned a sudden faintness to steal over her, forgot her own feelings in those now awakened for de l'Armencour. He still lived, but death hovered over him, and she might, perhaps, prolong his days to repentance. No recollection of the repeated heinous offences he had committed against her, any longer embittered her spirit; her persecutor had paid the penalty for his crimes, and was now in suffering and danger, which it might be in her power to relieve him from. Winged by christian forgiveness, she flew to the succour of her enemy, and bending over the clay-cold figure, shuddered at the icy touch and livid paleness, which spread the look of death over a face rendered hideous by a terrible wound, and the agony it stamped upon each feature. In spite of the repugnance she felt to fix her eyes upon this horrible object, and her aversion to examine the wound, she performed the office duty enjoined. Having

torn her pocket-handkerchief, she employed a portion of it to wash the blood away, which had streamed over his face; and desiring an attendant to hold his hand over the lacerated part to check the bleeding, the amiable girl got a knife from Albion, and prepared some lint, which she hoped might stop the hæmorrhage: equally as expert as she was anxious to render the humane service her virtue had undertaken, she bound on with dexterity and haste the lint under a compress, which, with a bandage, she made from the remainder of her handkerchief. After this first care of stopping the effusion of blood, Erina desired Zeleida and Albion to raise her patient's head carefully from the earth; whilst with salts and lavender water, that she thought herself fortunate in having in her pocket, she endeavoured to recall the senses of de l'Armencour: and after long and unremitted assiduity, she experienced extreme satisfaction in finding her efforts successful in reviving him to some indication of recovery from the torpid state in which she found him. Moving his lips, he groaned, and opened his eyes; then closed them, with a look of expiring life; whilst the benign girl ejaculated a prayer, that Heaven might regard with mercy a dying sinner. Although she feared he had uttered his last sigh, she continued to sprinkle his pallid face with lavender water, as the beating of his

pulse indicated that the vital spark was not yet quite extinct. Even had death already seized its victim, Erina would not have left her inveterate persecutor's body lying on the blood-stained ground, where he had apparently been murdered, a prey to birds and savage beasts. The bare idea of such an act would have frozen her with horror; and to rescue even the lifeless remains of her enemy from being mangled and unburied in the woods, she would have risked some danger and much difficulty.

Her wish was to remove him from the earth, moistened with his blood, to the carriage, and get him conveyed to the hamlet she had just left; whither she purposed to return with Zeleida on foot, to entreat a place of safety for the body of the count, until she returned to Chandenagore, to dispatch proper persons to conduct his interment. Erina had no longer cause to seek concealment on the road: she believed her danger now expired with de l'Armencour; yet her gentle nature could not but lament the event which had freed her from every apprehension of being pursued. The persecutor, who had repeatedly sought her destruction, whom she had reason to imagine in quest of her, when the hand of death arrested his search after her, which might have proved but too suc-

cessful, as she had had so much cause to believe his schemes too deeply laid to be avoided,—the being into whose power she might again have fallen at the moment she perceived him lying murdered on the road, was now a breathless corse before her.—What a contemplation for a piously reflective mind! Erina's soul felt the full impression the circumstance was calculated to make; and with the most lively sentiments of grateful devotion for her late deliverances and present escape from imminent perils, she experienced a kind of melancholy peace, a species of sad though serene expectation of happiness in the certainty of being speedily restored to her beloved Rosaline, unalloyed by the fears she had recently felt from the anticipation that her return to the bosom of friendship would occasion her to wound its peace; for it would have been equally impossible for her to conceal from Rosaline and de Briançon the cause of her extraordinary disappearance, as it would have been impossible for them not to feel that indignation against de l'Armencour his infamous conduct merited; and Erina had foreseen consequences, which would have involved her in misery from the unhappiness and, perhaps, ruin of her friends.

From such painful anticipations the occurrence

of that morning had delivered her: yet she could not without a sensation of sadness view the dismal object which the murdered count presented.

By the assistance of the attendants, he was laid on the carriage, which Erina ordered back to the neighbouring hamlet; and, following the melancholy sight, she repaired thither with Zeleida and Albion, to put her generous design in execution, of paying some of the Indians to guard the body until she gave advice at Chandenagore where it might be found, to receive decorous obsequies.

Although the way to the hamlet was not long, Erina found herself much incommoded by the intense heat of the sun, and was nearly exhausted by fatigue when she arrived at the end of her walk.

The appearance of an European female, in a place where very few of her sex and country ever came, brought round her a crowd, at first attracted by curiosity, and now gathering equally from the fascination of her blooming beauty, and the interest her youth and lovely manners excited. As Erina was, from constant practice of conversing in the language of the country, become not only fluent, but even eloquent in the expression of her sentiments in the Hindoo, she easily prevailed on

the Indians to admit the remains into a shed, where they might be in safety, upon the promise of a certain sum of money, of which Erina paid them half in advance from her own purse, exhausted almost to the last rupee by this act of liberality.

The carriage being conducted to the place thus hired for the reception of the body, Erina attended to see it safely deposited in the care of the person who undertook to guard it until claimed for interment.

Upon unclosing the curtains of the vehicle, the people, who were about to remove the remains of de l'Armencour into the shed, assured Erina he was not yet yet dead, and she, on approaching the carriage, found the report true; for the livid paleness that had alarmed her, no longer spread the hue of death over his face, and an increased colour and respiration indicated that the deep swoon, which had been supposed to be the torpidity of expiring nature, was yielding to returning animation.

The exercise of the carriage had produced a renovated circulation of the languid powers of life, and the moist chill of dissolution, creeping over the wounded count, in proportion to the blood

that flowed from his temple as he lay on the cold ground, was now checked by the warmth of renewed vitality. With an emotion of generous kindness, Erina felt his quickened pulse and returning heat; and ordering some warm and nutritive beverage to be brought with all haste, she poured some warmed milk down his throat, with a care and assiduity that marked not only the amiable desire of fulfilling a christian duty, but that the fulfilment of the duty was performed with a true christian disposition.

After having administered a good deal of this restorative fluid, Erina saw with real pleasure her attention answered with the best success. She beheld de l'Armencour move his limbs and unclose his eyes, which he fixed on her with an earnest scrutiny, and an expression of intelligence, that convinced her his senses were sufficiently restored to recognize her. As he rivetted his enquiring gaze on her, there was a look of confusion mingled with surprise, which her amiable nature attributed to a sentiment of contrition that often accompanies the shame of guilt. She had already pardoned his offences against her, and prayed that Heaven might also forgive him.

The angelic disposition of her mind beamed in

radiant softness on her countenance, and rendered it divine; and encouraged by the benign expression of her looks, the count took her hand, and, pressing it to his breast, endeavoured to articulate something which died in sighs upon his lips.

The humane girl, touched by this action, that she fancied a deprecation of anger, assured her patient she harboured no malevolence against him; and that, although his offences against her had been not only repeated, but of the most aggravating kind, her displeasure had subsided instantly on the view of his sufferings, which she anxiously wished to relieve.

"Is is possible, then, that you pardon me?" cried de l'Armencour eagerly, in a faint voice.

"I do from my soul," said Erina: "divine mercy condescends to forgive the most heinous crimes upon true repentance—how then can frail mortals dare to be implacable, especially when they are commanded by the blessed Saviour of mankind to pardon the offences of their fellow-creatures, as they hope for mercy?"

"You are, indeed, an angel!" ejaculated the

count; "but I merit not forgiveness," he added, in a low deep tone, expressive of despair, "I deserve not the mercy of Heaven; my words and life have blasphemed——I am an outlaw of nature—and must meet the universal and eternal condemnation so justly my due."

"It is never too late to repent," cried Erina, in gentle and persuasive accents, modulated to seraphic sweetness of tone by heavenly charity and angelic pity. "To die in hardened sin, and an obstinate disposition against repentance, we are assured, indeed, will close the gates of salvation against us: but celestial mercy stands at Heaven's portal to admit the contrite criminal who lives to abhor and forsake his wickedness."

The count shook his head, groaned, and shuddered, whilst Erina thus continued:—"You have lived to see your errors; and perhaps the mercy of Providence may yet spare your days to repair your faults."

"Alas! no!" replied de l'Armencour, writhing in mental agony as in bodily anguish—"the hand of death lies heavy on me. I am sensible I have not long to live. What a death-bed is mine! The excruciating torments of mind, blended with

corporeal sufferings, awaken my affrighted conscience, to tell me these dreadful pains are but the commencement of eternal tortures; and maddened reason, in the hour of dissolution, confesses to itself its fatal disbelief of truths, which now flash distracting conviction on my soul. As the moment of death approaches, I feel the existence of the offended Deity my profane lips have so often denied, and I anticipate that futurity I have so frequently discredited."

"Compose yourself," said Erina mildly, "and unite your prayers with mine, that you may be graciously spared to a renewed life of repentance and virtue."

"It is too late," cried de l'Armencour, in a voice and with an action of frantic despair—"no light of consolatory hope beams on my mind: my soul, plunged in the dark abyss of perdition, desires in vain the intoxicating anodyne of infidelity, to steep my senses in a momentary calm of believing death a perpetual sleep and annihilation after dissolution; but reason, on the brink of the grave, shakes off all the delirium of passion, and leaves me not even the consolation of dying as I have lived, an infidel."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Erina, trembling at the wildness of de l'Armencour's speech: "I will supplicate," she continued in a softened tone, "that you may yet live a Christian, instead of dying an atheist." Thus saying, she detached the crucifix from her bosom, and presented it to the count.

This pious act composed him from a state of almost raging mania to its most gloomy despondence. Hiding his eyes with one hand, he pushed the sacred symbol of christian faith from him with the other; then, after a moment's silence, in a solemn manner he uncovered his face, and fixing a dejected look on Erina, he clasped his hands, and in an awful voice, thus addressed her:

"You may press to your virtuous heart that cross which my guilty hands dare not touch. Despairing of salvation myself, I would yet warn others from the perdition in which I am involved, from the complicated criminality of my life. That life now terminating, leaves me no time to repair the guilt I lament in vain. The desperation of my mind unfits me even for repentance, and precludes the possibility of prayer, which I learn too

late can be the consolation of the virtuous, and is necessary to deprive a death-bed of the horrors that attend it. Piety may look with hope on that faith which, to think upon, makes my soul shudder. The offended majesty of Heaven I dare not address: to you, however, I am encouraged to make a full confession of my crimes, that you may tell the world no infidel dies an atheist.

"From vanity, which prompted me to seek distinction by any means, I professed myself an unbeliever, before I was sufficiently perverted in understanding to doubt divine revelation. Under the denomination of an *esprit fort*, I affected to despise religion as the absurd superstition of weak and vulgar minds; and from passion as well as pride, I plunged into a vicious course of life, to appear what I professed myself. In a succession of vices, I felt the necessity of being what I seemed, and gladly persuaded myself all was really as I wished to believe.—My reason became intoxicated with what the world calls philosophy, and soon lost all power to distinguish truth from error: in this inebriation of intellect, I sought pleasure in vain in the excesses of depravity—enjoyment, like the fleeting shadow of a varying cloud, eluded my grasp. Satiated with gratifications, which were speedily exhausted, I contrived

new modes of infamy, and possessed every thing without relish. To plan and systematize wickedness at length was the sole occupation of my life; and the wish of initiating others into debauchery and infidelity, to maintain my character as supremely depraved, became my only amusement, as it alone gratified the reigning passion of my soul.

"Vanity became my god. Instigated by it to obtain you, because I saw you universally admired, caressed, and coveted by numerous adorers, I resolved to pursue you at every risk. It is needless for me, I presume, to inform you that you were decoyed into a snare contrived by me when you were stolen from the villa: your escape from the woman, who for a bribe deluded you into my power, convinces me you suspected her to be an infamous agent of mine to lure you to ruin."

"I am acquainted with all your last machinations for my destruction," interrupted Erina, "and can conjecture that it was in search of me that you met the fate which I sincerely trust my intervention may have prevented having fatal consequences. Let us hope," she continued, "that the event which saved me probably from falling again into your power, will be equally providential for you,

and save you likewise from destruction. Revere in this occurrence the united justice and singular mercy of the Almighty; and may the Deity you have lived to acknowledge, in his infinite goodness, prolong the existence almost miraculously spared to you, and give you grace to forsake the crimes you lament!"

De l'Armencour mournfully shook his head, and almost groaned a sigh, whilst Erina thus continued:

"Sincere repentance ought never to despair of that mercy and salvation promised to contrition. The strong evidence of your's has awakened towards you an esteem which until this moment I never felt for you. I now add regard to the interest your present situation inspires; and I become anxious to learn by what accident you received the wound I trust my interference has prevented being fatal."

"Your escape," replied the count, "was discovered too late to render a diligent search after you effectual in the neighbourhood of the spot where you fled from your negligent guards. In despair at your loss, on account of the forfeiture

of the sum I had promised the infamous woman, on her delivery of you completely into my power, she hastened to inform me of your escape, in hopes that, by instantly dispatching numerous emissaries in search of you on all the roads leading to Chandenagore, you might be arrested in your way thither, and, by falling into my power, entitle her to claim the reward of her infamous stealth of you, which she had been bribed to undertake.

"I will not dwell on the rage I experienced on learning your flight. The failure of my wicked plans always sensibly afflicted me, although the completion of my infamous desires never procured me the anticipated enjoyments I ever vainly flattered myself would attend the fruition of my wishes. It is thus that wickedness is continually punished, even in this world, by the torments of perpetual disappointment.

"Infuriated by the frustrasion of my expectations at the moment I had looked forward to their certain accomplishment, I treated the partner of my crimes with the insults her vices merited, but which I had no right to inflict. Instantly dispatching the numerous myrmidons I had at my command, in every direction towards Chande-

nagore, I set out myself on horseback with only one equestrian attendant, intending to pursue you night and day.

"Yesterday evening, after baiting at this hamlet, as I presume, I entered a wood, and had not proceeded far in its intricacies, when I was beset by several desperate villains, who plundered and knocked me off my horse, whilst my attendant fled to save himself, instead of assisting me to resist the robbers.

"The punishment I merited so long has at length overtaken me, and you are avenged by that Power which always protects the virtuous, and even in this world frequently hurls destruction on the vicious. This is one of those many examples which often prove to the observant moralist, that the recompence of the good, and the punishment of the wicked, are certain, however they may be delayed."

Erina was delighted to find de l'Armencour so restored in strength. He had become an interesting object to her enthusiastic benevolence, under the hope, that her cares might restore him to a prolonged life of repentance; and, resolving to continue every assiduity in her power to render him

further and more effectual services, she requested him to compose his weak frame and exhausted spirits in the carriage, where she believed he would be well attended, until she could send off a dispatch to Chandenagore for medical and clerical assistance, to complete the cure of his wound and mind, which she flattered herself might not be difficult to effect, as the count confessed himself easier in all respects from the soothing assiduities of his kind nurse, and promised faithfully to attend to her advice in every thing.

As the people who had gathered round Erina were ready to assist her in all she required, she ordered some rice to be ground extremely fine, and boiled in milk, to the consistence of a jelly, judging that the count would want some nourishment before he proceeded on his way homeward, and she thought the rice and milk jelly would be the best sustenance that could be procured for her patient in his present situation.

Whilst Albion was attending to the execution of Erina's orders, in the culinary preparation for de l'Armeucour, she informed him of her earnest wish to purchase the amiable Malabar boy's liberty, and that she was certain her friend Lady Kinross would, on her account, answer any pecu-

niary consideration which Albion's mistress might demand for his emancipation.

Her next care was to hire a messenger for an immediate express to Chandenagore; and, having easily procured a person to undertake a speedy voyage thither, she wrote with a pencil on the leaves of her pocket-book a brief account of her situation and that of the count; and entreating de Briançon, as he valued her esteem, to dispatch a surgeon and priest as soon as possible to de l'Armencour, whose penitence had obtained her entire forgiveness, she concluded by assuring her beloved friend, Rosaline, and her protector, the viscount, that she was perfectly well, and had been promised a safe asylum at the Indian village until she could return to Chandenagore, and that she should continue her journey to the villa as soon as the carriage and guards returned from conducting the count to his house, which was not far distant.

Having written a note to this effect, and instantly dispatched it to the viscount's address, equally anxious to relieve the distress of her friends, and to serve de l'Armencour, whom she hoped to save from destruction by her care, she persuaded him to take a good deal of the nourish-

ment prepared for him; and had the satisfaction to find her assiduities had restored her patient to a condition in which his removal home might be undertaken without either much pain or danger. As the carriage, although not an extremely easy vehicle, was the only conveyance that could be employed to take the count from his present situation, where no accommodation for a sick European could have been found, Erina gladly yielded this convenience to de l'Armencour, although it not only delayed her return to the friends she was impatient beyond expression to behold, but subjected her to most unpleasant circumstances; for she was aware that not a single habitation in the village would be open for her reception, and that she must take up her abode under some shed, to defend her from the heat of the sun by day, and from the dew at night. No selfish consideration, however, ever had any influence over Erina; when, by the sacrifice of her own advantage, she could afford it to a fellow-creature, she never consulted her individual interest, if it were in opposition to that of others; and she accommodated herself to the present delay, and all the inconvenience it would occasion her, not only without a murmur, but with real pleasure, in the reflection that she was fulfilling a christian duty to the suffering count, and that the messenger she had dispatched

might arrive at the villa some hours sooner than she herself could have reached it, to set the minds of her friends at ease about her.

With such sentiments of nobly disinterested benevolence she bid a kind adieu to de l'Armencour as he set off on his way homeward. Much affected by her generous wishes for his health and happiness, he raised himself to take leave of his admirable preserver; and bowing on Erina's hand, in pitying condescension extended towards him as a seal of her pardon, he assured her, the bright example of her virtue had lighted his understanding to view the deformity of his vices; and that if his penitance could procure his salvation, it was her work.

Delighted with this testimony of his mental amendment, and indulging the hope he might live to virtue and happiness, the lovely girl smiled a last adieu and entire forgiveness; and without one selfish regret, saw herself left in a strange Indian village far from her friends, to seek an uncertain refuge for herself and her two companions, equally unknown as herself to every human being in the place.

Her situation, her loveliness, and the charms

of her manner, had however excited such a powerful interest concerning her in every inhabitant at the hamlet, that all the people, of every age and both sexes, anxiously surrounded her to offer their best services. Of several invitations to take some refreshment, she accepted one to the cottage of a person whose urbanity particularly pleased her: and on entering an inclosure, was delighted with the polite reception she met.

Her host and hostess were an aged couple encircled by a numerous progeny of several generations, who appeared to dwell under the same roof. The habitation of this large family, although constructed with matting, inclosed three sides of a square, which on the fourth side was terminated by a mud wall and entrance. The abode was low and thatched, and overshadowed by trees and creeping plants, amongst which gourds, melons, and cucumbers of amazing size and luxuriance, grew in great profusion; giving a degree of wild and rural beauty to the cottage, which opened every where into the inclosed court by a rustic arcade supported by the boughs of the overhanging trees, that formed an umbrageous canopy over the cottage and the court.

Under the spreading boughs of these trees mats

were spread for the guests to repose during the heat of noon, whilst the inhabitants of the cottage busied themselves in various preparations for their dinner.

According to the manners of the country, the refreshments of beetle and smoking were offered to Erina and her companions; but as she had not adopted the modes of Hindoostan, either in the use of the hookah, or chewing the aromatic composition of beetle, she left those luxuries to Zeleida and Albion, and was extremely delighted in seeing them enjoy themselves after their late fatigues; and amusing herself in kindly playing with the children of the cottage, she passed her moments in placid happiness, notwithstanding her separation from her friends and exile from her country. A total privation of employment, however, made the time hang heavily on her hands, whilst she impatiently waited the return of the carriage which was to convey her to the bosom of friendship and a home of felicity; and the count's residence being about twenty miles from the village where Erina must take up her abode until the day after the morrow, and the bullocks could not set out on their journey to Chandenagore without some previous rest after their return from de l'Armencour's.

As Erina's hosts could not admit their guests into the apartments of their dwelling without the forfeiture of their caste, or religion, they performed the duty of hospitality to strangers by erecting temporary sheds of matting in the inclosure, as places for their repose and shelter from the sun and dews. The carriage and attendants arrived at the village on the morning after their departure from it with the count, and brought back a note from him addressed to Erina; in which she read as follows:

"Although reduced to extreme debility both of mind and body, I cannot permit this opportunity to pass without seizing the occasion it presents me to address to you the acknowledgment of obligations, it is impossible I can ever repay. Your own feelings, however, must amply recompense you; for beneficence is its own reward, and the consciousness of virtue, I can feel, from my own remorse, must be the greatest happiness, as the consciousness of guilt is misery.

"Thanks to your humanity, my generous preserver from immediate death, my wound is not painful; yet I am certain it will be mortal in its consequences, as I feel dissolution gradually approaching in excessive weakness. Through your

care I trust I may linger in life until the arrival of a priest: it will be a consolation to me to die under absolution, although my hopes of salvation are weak in proportion to the magnitude of my sins.

" Reduced to the brink of the grave, a sinner sees all its horrors without one consolatory reflection. It is only at the gate of the tomb that mortal eyes truly see the insignificance of this world, and the importance of futurity. It is in this position I see the real deformity of vice, and the charms of virtue.

" The wretched partner of my late infamy and crimes has repaid me as I merit. On my return to this place I found she had taken advantage of my absence, in search of you, to abscond with a great deal of my property; and has left me, pillaged of every convenience, to perish. Such is the conduct of the vicious creature whom I nearly ruined my fortune to gratify in all her unreasonable wishes and unbounded extravagance. How differently have you acted! You, whom I persecuted to misery, and purposed to destroy, you found me wounded and expiring; and exerting every effort to save my life, and rescue me from perdition, you have sacrificed your comfort to

relieve me from the wretchedness I brought on myself in seeking your destruction!

" May Heaven, whose laws you obey in this, bless you for it here and hereafter according to your merit!

" *Beneficence is lovely, kindness is an angelic disposition, and charity is the most amiable quality of human nature, and the only one in which man can imitate the Divinity. Benevolence to our fellow-creatures alone entitles us to celestial mercy. Affection to our friends, although a duty of high importance, is too natural to be meritorious; but to love our enemies, to be kind to those who persecute us, and to do good to those who grievously sin against us, is the highest exertion of virtue, as it is the most difficult thing to follow in this, as we are bound, the command and example of him who became a sacrifice for transgressors, and died on the cross to save his enemies.*"

CHAP. VI.

" There is no situation, however distressing, in which the hope of relief should be excluded; neither is there any misfortune, how severe soever it may appear, where there is not infinite cause for thankfulness, that the evil is not aggravated by a possible accumulation of misery, from which we are preserved most evidently by celestial mercy."

TO diversify the scene, to pass some idle hours in amusement, and to retain health by necessary exercise, Erina, as usual, with Zeleida, took an evening and morning walk out of the inclosure where she had taken up her temporary abode. In these rambles at sun-set and dawn, she desired Albion to attend her, as she was too timid to venture about a country quite new to her, in company with only a female companion.

On the second evening after her arrival at the village, and that previous to her intended departure thence, as she was taking her walk in its environs, leaning on Zeleida's arm, and followed by her faithful attendant Albion, she strolled into a wood in search of refreshing shade from the declining sun.

The day had been sultry, and the evening zephyrs gently fanned the thick foliage of the grove, inviting the ramblers into its deepest recesses; where a pool of water often tempted the weary traveller to quench his thirst in the gurgling rivulet that supplied the tank. Mantled with luxuriant lotus, its clear surface spread a wide and irregular extent in wild and picturesque beauty, while the over-arching wood that surrounded its banks presented a silvan scene of extraordinary richness.

Erina had wandered about this delightful retreat for some time undisturbed by the apprehension of any danger. She had seen the inhabitants of the neighbouring hamlet come down to wash their linen in the pool; she had been pleased in viewing the beautiful Asiatic women fill the water-vessels at the rivulet, whilst their children plunged into the tank and sported amidst the lotus. Having procured a number of its flowers, she sat down with

Zeleida on the mossy bank of the water, and was amusing herself in examining the beauty of these large and fragrant lilies, when she was surprised and alarmed by the sudden appearance of an immense buffalo coming towards her. The creature's gigantic size, and amazing breadth of horns, added to the stories she had heard of their wildness, terrified Erina; and calling to Zeleida and Albion to follow her, she fled with them into the thickest part of the wood to conceal herself amongst the thickets from an animal she apprehended in pursuit of her.

Having reached a close covert, she hid herself amongst the long grass and luxuriant weeds, with which the place abounded; until warned by Zeleida that poisonous snakes might lurk beneath the herbage, she started from her concealment, and afraid of encountering the buffalo, which she perceived standing at the pool, she darted into the wood in a different direction towards a glade, where she saw people at a distance seated on the grass beneath the trees. Hoping to find protection in the group before her, Erina, with her companions, ran towards the men gathered in a circle. As the fugitives approached, the females were eyed with mingled surprise and admiration, and promised the defence they solicited.

The men were half a dozen in number, dressed like Mahometans, and had a very courteous address, although their aspect seemed ferocious from their being armed with scimeters and shields, and wearing large mustachios and prodigious turbans.

They had all been smoking; but when Erina accosted them, and mentioned her alarm at the buffalo, the company rose; and a man amongst them of superior mien, who appeared to command them, drawing his weapon, assured her he would protect her from every danger.

From the station she had gained she watched the animal she had fled, and perceived it standing in the pathway leading to the village, with an aspect so terrible that she could not bring herself to think of approaching it, notwithstanding her wish to return to her quarters at the cottage.

The men who stood around her observed her with particular attention, and she noticed them conversing with each other in a very low voice, as if in secret and earnest consultation respecting her. The sun was sinking in the horizon; Erina reflected that the shades of evening would quickly succeed, and she experienced an indescribable alarm from the awkwardness of her situation. That these men

were a gang of plunderers immediately struck her fancy, when she remarked them in close conference together, whilst they eyed her with portentous scrutiny; and it as instantly occurred to her that this must be the gang that had beset, robbed, and endeavoured to murder the count. More terrified at the danger in which she now believed herself than at the creature from which she had fled, Erina summoned all her presence of mind for reflection and action. Then taking her purse from her pocket, she presented it to the chief of the party, telling him she was concerned the offer was not greater, as she felt herself extremely grateful for the promises of protection they had made to her: but as that was all the money, or valuable things she had about her, it would be impossible for her to remunerate their service of conducting her past the buffalo in safety to the neighbouring hamlet until her arrival at home, where she hoped to be in a short time; and where, if they would call on her at the Viscount de Briançon's villa at Chandenagore, she should be happy to pay them a handsome debt of gratitude.

Her address seemed to astonish the party, as it extorted a general acclamation: the chief making an obeisance, took the purse, and abruptly

demanded if she was travelling alone or with friends.

This question startled Erina; she had not expected such an interrogation: and besides, it appeared a strange and rather a suspicious demand. Feeling it impossible to speak any thing but the truth, however dangerous it might be to her to discover herself out of the protection of her friends, whose vicinity the alarmed girl imagined might have been some check on the designs of the men, whom she now was more than ever convinced must be banditti, she replied with much presence of mind, that her travelling guards were not far distant; and that she should claim nothing more from their kindness, than to be escorted, with her two attendants, past the buffalo; as she should then be very near the place of her abode for that night: to this Erina courteously added a repeated invitation for their future demand upon her generosity at Chandenagore; hoping that the prospect of gain in perspective might induce the men to permit her safe passage through them at present. Her expectation in this, however, was vain; for instead of leading the way before her to the village, to which direction she pointed with a commanding mien, the party instantly surrounded Erina and her two companions, unsheathed their

scimeters, and swore by Mahomet they would put immediately to death the first who dared dispute their order, or even utter a syllable of complaint, or the slightest murmur of discontent. After which tremendous threat the chief desired Erina and her attendants to proceed through the wood in a direction from the village.

Although terrified almost to petrifaction, with all the dignity of insulted spirit, Erina gazed a moment in silent contempt upon the gang of threatening desperadoes who had surrounded her; then frowning on their stern chief, she thus addressed him: "I would learn who you are who thus offend the confidence of female virtue in distress: let me inform you, and all your band, that the timid creature who entreated your protection, has courage to scorn your menaces, and dispute your power."

Thus saying, she called aloud for assistance, in hopes her piercing cries might alarm the gang from sinister purposes, under an idea of the populace of the village gathering to oppose them. This effort of Erina to save herself increased, if possible, her dismay; for she was instantly seized by the ruffians and carried off with Zelida and Albion, in spite of struggling and shrieking to

be set at liberty. The wood seemed almost interminable to the wretched prisoners, who saw themselves borne rapidly through the thickest recesses of the forest to wild coverts, apparently removed from every human habitation, and where the jungle, or close coppice, offered retreats to beasts of prey. From each bush of the thick brush-wood, amidst whose entangled mazes Erina was borne, she expected to behold a huge tiger, a fierce leopard, or the still more terrific hyena, spring out upon her with glaring eye-balls and destructive fangs. Much, however, as her nature shrunk with dread at the idea of being torn in pieces by the gaunt and cruelly ferocious prowlers of the woods, her reason felt less terror at the apprehension of being attacked by wild beasts in all their fury, than, escaping their search, to be reserved for unknown horrors. Her seizure was as inexplicable to her as the place of her destination was concealed from her; for to her repeated enquiries, why she had been carried off, and whither she was conducted, Erina received no answer from any of the ruffians.

Wearied at length with unavailing moans, the prisoners in silence submitted themselves to be dragged forward without resistance to their inexorable tyrants.

As the clouds of night veiled the world in darkness they issued from the forest, and pursued their way over an uneven tract of country, which, by the light of the moon, appeared to be a wide, uncultivated waste, untrodden by human kind; for they passeed over a great extent of barren wilds, where no footpath marked the arid ground. After being carried a prodigious way across this desert region, without encountering a living creature, or seeing any sign of a single habitation, Erina perceived she was drawing near a chain of mountains, which bounded the view of steril desolation. As she approached the masses of huge precipices that frowned in a deep shade over their passage into a narrow valley, her frozen blood seemed to stagnate in her veins with increasing horror, and her soul appeared ready to free itself from her trembling frame in convulsive struggles. The idea of speedy death acted on Erina's mind as a consolation, and in a surprising composure of spirits she addressed herself to Heaven in mental prayer. On a review of the actions of her life, no stings of conscience filled her with alarm at the prospect of being soon called to answer for her conduct. On an impartial examination of herself, she felt assured she had, from the first dawn of her reason, endeavoured to learn with accuracy, and to perform strictly her duties of

every kind, and her steady faith made her feel secure that, the merits of her Redeemer's sacrifice would clear her from the imperfections of her nature. Absorbed in such a train of reflections, and elevated above this earth in pious contemplations, she was almost lost to a sense of worldly danger and every sorrow, when she was set down at the entrance of a cave, amidst the mountain steeps which were partially lighted by moon-beams.

Here the men, who had carried her and Zeleida a great length of way, sat down to rest themselves around their three prisoners; and striking a light, soon made a fire of dry sticks, at which they trimmed their hookahs that each man carried for smoking; and in which luxury the party now indulged so perfectly at their ease, as led Erina to suppose they considered themselves in a place of entire security. Indeed, the wildness of the scene, and the great length of way they had passed without meeting a single habitation, or even a traveller, was sufficient to convince her she was far removed from every human being, but such as make rapine their trade. She looked around her with horror to behold herself, and her two faithful companions, surrounded by a guard of ferocious banditti in their solitary haunts; and as the fire cast a red gleam on their terrific aspect, thrown forward

to her view by the darkness of the cave, she shuddered with horrid presages that rushed on her mind, where fancy embodied complicated miseries in every form that could most terrify the imagination.

Whilst Zeleida and Albion, plunged in deep despair, sat silently brooding over their distress, and Erina, nearly bereaved of her senses, threw melancholy glances of fearful expectation on the circle of savage tyrants who sat regaling themselves, the chief thus addressed her:

"In answer to your repeated interrogations, relative to our seizure of you and your attendants, I will now inform you, Lady, why we have made you our prisoner. You see before you a set of daring men who defy the laws. Condemned by them for crimes we have fled society, by which we have been proscribed, and exist by plunder. As robbery is our trade, and we perceived you to be infinitely more precious than the purse you offered us, we agreed to seize you instead of rifling you, with an intention of making you purchase your freedom at a much higher price than your utmost generosity would have remunerated us for the protection you demanded of us.

"You must be sensible, Lady, that your person and life are now completely in our power. You have mentioned that you have friends at Chandenagore, whither you were on your journey when we arrested you. Our object in seizing you was gain; if you will now swear by all a Christian holds most sacred, never to betray us to justice, and take also a solemn oath to ensure us the prompt payment of whatever demand we make for your ransom, and set us in the way to secure it, your liberty, and that of your attendants, will follow.

"If you solemnly bind yourself to protect us from the pursuit of your friends and public discovery, and that we shall receive with impunity our demands for your freedom, we will conduct you home, retaining, in addition to the bond of your oaths, your two attendants as hostages for the fulfilment of your obligations: in which, however, your failing in the least part of your engagement, death or eternal imprisonment to yourself, and massacre or perpetual slavery to your companions will be the inevitable consequences to revenge your breach of promise; for our deeds are promptly decisive, daring, and sure, as they are secret and lawless."

Informed of all Erina had to dread for herself,

and those she regarded, her situation, from mysterious darkness and uncertain consequences that had lent it ideal terrors, became, if possible, more distressing by the clear light which now beamed full upon the most painful circumstances, and she stood with horror at the proposals made to her. A fate for herself and her faithful companions, as direful as her busy imagination had already conceived possible, still impended over her in certainty, unless she bound herself in solemn oaths to league with banditti, and protect ferocious outlaws, not only to rob and murder the community at large, but to plunder her dearest friends, her kindest protectors, to an indefinite amount. Supposing the probability of effecting her own ransom by such abominable, impious, and cruelly illegal means, still her faithful companion Zeleida, whom she felt herself bound to love as the associate of her misfortunes; and her kind protector Albion, who had such claims to her eternal gratitude for his faithfully affectionate services, would be left in the arbitrary power of men, who, revering no laws, might hold themselves at liberty to increase the hardness of conditions, or infringe them at the whim of cruel caprice, or the impulse of superior advantage.

Impossible as she felt it thus to compromise

her sentiments and principles, she knew not in what manner to conduct herself, so as not to betray herself and the interests of those she regarded, and considered herself bound to guard from every danger it might be in her power to avert. Silenced by strong emotions and the confusion of conflicting ideas, she remained mournfully pensive, revolving in her nearly distracted mind the dreadful difficulty of her agonizing situation. It appeared to her as if the fate of all her friends had been put in her power; and that on her determination not only the welfare, the happiness, but the life of many individuals depended: that the freebooters, who had required her to purchase her freedom at the immense price of oaths she abhorred, were murderers as well as plunderers, they had confessed; to swear to protect them, and to engage to further their depredations, not only on the public, but her beloved friends, seemed an atrocity equal to that practised by the banditti themselves; she felt, that in shielding them from justice she should be accessary, and consequently answerable for all the crimes they might in future commit. To bind herself for their security, or to refuse entering into an engagement to protect them from the punishment so justly merited by their lawless and cruel deeds, seemed equally pregnant with criminality, misery, and ruin to her-

self and her friends. She had heard, indeed, that oaths extorted by force, were not regarded as binding in the eyes of the law; yet her candid, upright, and nobly generous nature, shrunk with detestation from deliberate, treacherous, deceptive perjury, even to robbers and assassins; and in a state of mind bordering on madness, she clasped her hands, and concealing her eyes with them, to exclude the view of horror around her, she groaned in all the agony of despair, unable to decide on the conduct she ought to pursue.

From this stupifaction of excessive distress she was aroused in a few moments, by hearing an irrevocable sentence pronounced against her by the chief of the banditti; who, at the instigation of his gang, decreed that the three prisoners should immediately be sold to the seraglio of a neighbouring prince, instead of being allowed the option of returning home. "I perceive I have acted foolishly," cried the desperado, in a severe and determined tone, "to make terms with a weak woman, which might tend to my destruction. I will not trust my life in the power of those whom vengeance would probably arm for my ruin. Instead of returning our prisoners to their friends, policy prompts me to the surer gain proposed by my comrades in council. Let us then

bear our prisoners to a place where we may sell them to those who purchase slaves for the harams of the sovereign princes. At such a market the beauty of this fair girl will bring a high gain to us, and at the same time, this mode of disposing of her will secure us from every apprehension or possibility of discovery; because the purchasers of such a treasure will have have an equal interest with ourselves in obviating her restoration to her friends; whilst she, immured for life within the inclosure of a well-guarded zenana with her attendants, can never appear against us to our condemnation, and her purchaser will fear to rouze our vengeance by pursuing us."

This dreadful sentence, against which there was no possibility of appeal, thunderstruck Erina and Zeleida, infinitely more than any decree which could have been passed for their immediate execution; and in a state of almost insane melancholy, they were borne from the dreary cave through the wild passes of the mountains to the rude acclivity of a rock, where a huge cavern admitted them to the deepest gloom of saddest solitude.

The moon had sunk beneath the surrounding heights that frowned over this cavern, ere the

wretched prisoners reached the dismal entrance of their dungeon, within which, darkness and silence reigned in awful solemnity.

Half dead with wild dismay, Erina uttered an involuntary groan on entering this abode of every crime and wretchedness, and the echo of the cavern repeated in lengthened cadences the sound of her moan, while fancy shuddered at the reverberation, as an omen of increasing horrors.

Having set their prisoners down within the cavern, each of the banditti called aloud, and were answered by a yell of mingled voices, which seemed to issue from several directions; and in a few moments a gleam of light darted through a variety of chasms in the rock, and displayed many tortuitous openings into the rude cavern. From these openings, a croud of black, ferocious looking, and almost naked ruffians, swarmed forth amidst the glare of a flaming torch, like demons rising from their infernal regions. In an instant, the wide cavern, was filled with this throng of beings monstrous in their appearance, and savage in their manners.

As they gathered round the object of their greatest curiosity, Erina trembled, and would have

shrunk from their looks of eager enquiry; while their chief, explaining her capture and his intentions, awed the multitude, inclined to be unruly, into order and submission by his words and gestures.

Having thus prepared his gang for obedience by threats and promises, and waving his scimeter as a sceptre, he commanded his associates to conduct his captives to the interior of the cavern; whither Erina and her companions were led, as unresisting victims to execution. Lively terror darted from the glances of Albion; he had been accustomed to slavery, and could have borne bondage, had he not lamented that the kind being who had promised him liberty, was the partner of his imprisonment. He looked at Erina with compassion, and seemed to sympathize in the woe strongly depicted in her lovely face and gestures Zeleida mourned her own fate, and that of her beloved instructress, with showers of tears, which keener anguish denied to the nearly frantic Erina.

They had no sooner reached the interior of the cavern than the captives were surrounded by a set of females scarcely human in their aspect. These women had been preparing viands for the robbers; and, at the stern orders of the chief, returned to

their culinary offices, to hasten the repast he commanded to be served with the utmost expedition.

By the gleam of a fire, and lamps dispersed about the cavern, Erina saw loads of plunder lying in heaps; and beheld the banditti, in various groupes, occupied in obeying the orders of their ruler; who desired that things might in an hour be prepared for their conveying the captives in a covered vehicle to the nearest city, where they could be sold to high profit for the zenana or haram of the neighbouring nabobs or rajahs.

Erina, who understood almost every syllable that was spoken in the Hindoo language, sickened at the orders which were given for her transportation from that place; although she was persuaded it would be impossible any scene could exhibit horrors worse than she witnessed in this wild den of savage monsters. Yet, here she felt secured from personal insult, as she had hitherto been treated with a species of respect; and she shuddered at the apprehension of the fate she might encounter elsewhere, when exposed to sale as the slave of a licentious despot.

Neither Erina, Zeleida, nor Albion, could taste

a morsel of the supper to which they were pressed. The chief, and about sixteen chosen associates, whom he selected from the band, ate their repast in haste; and girding themselves for an excursion from the cavern, in the habit of palanquin-bearers and armed guards, such as accompany travellers in India, desired the captives to repair to the entrance of the cavern; and taking Albion with them, and the whole gang of ruffians, left Erina and Zeleida to follow with two women, whom they charged to conduct the prisoners to the appointed place, whilst every thing was arranging for their departure from the cavern on a long journey.

As all resistance would have been ineffectual, the silently mourning girl, and the weeping Zeleida, submitted to their fate: trusting in that guiding Providence, to whose care they each committed themselves in frequent supplicatory ejaculations, that his mercy would watch over them; and indulging all the hope that remained to support them in this dreadfully trying situation, that change of place might afford them some unforeseen succour. Zeleida cherished such an expectation, from that natural elasticity of the human mind to struggle against despondence, and Erina checked despair by religious confidence; which whispered to

her pious soul, that to trust in Heaven, amidst the rudest shocks of misfortune, was the duty of a christian.

Thus devoutly disposed and somewhat tranquillized in spirit, she viewed in calm sadness the preparations for her melancholy journey. Two litters covered with curtains had been hastily put together for their secret and secure conveyance. Into one of these vehicles, commonly used in India for the transportation of the native females, who always travel unseen, Zeleida and Albion entered at the command of the guards; and Erina being put into the second litter, they commenced the dreaded journey in the dead of night, guided by a torch-bearer down the steep intricacies of the surrounding mountains.

Although the carriers slipped at every step, and Erina expected to be precipitated from the rocky heights over which they passed, into the deep glens beneath, she experienced no alarm from such imminent danger, rendered trivial in her estimation, on a comparison with the horrors of perpetual slavery of the worst description in perspective. Ruminating on the dreadful prospect before her, she reckoned the lapse of every moment by an in-

creasing pang, until the dawn appeared to light her on her dreary way.

By a frequent relief from the burthen of the litters in a change of bearers, the men, inured to labour and fatigue, did not stop to rest themselves in their journey, till the sun had risen so high as to render the heat extreme, when the travellers sought repose and refreshment in a grove by the road side. Here the men, who had procured some fruit and milk at a neighbouring village, sat down under the shade of the trees to regale themselves, pressing the captives to partake of the fare; which, from excessive exhaustion they were tempted to taste, as a remedy for thirst, that had become very painful. Erina found herself much relieved from the admission of fresh air into her vehicle, by the lifting of the thick curtains, which, when closed, nearly stifled her; and the cool juice of the water-melon removed the suffering of thirst.

After resting for some time, the men again pursued their journey; and towards the close of that day, Erina found herself set down with her two companions in the court of an Indian dwelling; where she was told she was to remain until disposed of to a purchaser. Being committed with

Zeleida to the care of a woman, she was conducted into the house, and attended with extreme assiduity. Melancholy as her situation was, Erina felt thankful that she had been released from the cave of the banditti, and that she was now under female care: and when she paid her devotions to Heaven for protection, before she lay down on the bed prepared for her repose that night, a repose which weary nature rendered necessary, and pleasing in contemplation, the pious girl felt a species of peace gaining on her mind, encouraged by religious dependance on the care of an Almighty Power: and when she reflected on her pillow, how miraculously Providence had hitherto protected her through all the dangers and difficulties she had passed, she perceived *there is no situation, however distressing, in which the hope of relief should be excluded. Neither is there any misfortune, how severe soever it may appear, where there is not infinite cause for thankfulness, that the evil is not aggravated by a possible accumulation of misery, from which we are preserved most evidently by celestial mercy.*

CHAP. VII.

"No apprehension of evil to ourselves should deter us from the performance of what we consider incumbent on us as Christians to do, since we are called on to pursue our duty steadily, without regard to consequences. Leaving them to an over-ruling Providence, we should consider perfect obedience and pious trust indispensible; and, relying on Heaven's care to avert threatened misfortunes, or to support us under every suffering supreme Wisdom sees fit to try us by, we may rest assured, the consciousness of having performed our duty will console us for every distress that can befal us, in consequence of our fulfilment of an obligation."

ERINA and Zeleida rose in the morning, refreshed by a night's repose, rendered sweet and tranquil from fatigue.

Erina, as usual, found in her devotional exercises of prayer and meditation that resignation which renders the christian mind peaceful amidst

the greatest evils: spiritual consolation, of all others the most effectual, afforded her the elasticity of soul requisite for her support under dreadful circumstances; and she took the sustenance necessary to preserve life, as a duty incumbent on a being, persuaded that perfect submission to the divine will, and an entire reliance on Providence, were equally essential to christianity.

She had not long finished a slender breakfast of rice and milk, when the chief of the banditti entered the apartment occupied by her and her captive companion, and informed them that he had found a purchaser for them, whom he expected in a few minutes to take a view of them.

Although Erina had been prepared for such an occurrence, yet she felt a considerable shock at the intelligence that she was actually on sale, and that she was immediately to be on view, and bargained for as a slave by some menial servant for a licentious master. Dreadful indeed were her sensations on this occasion; and nearly stupified with horror, she saw a hideous Mahometan enter the room, and examine her with scrutinizing attention. All the pride of her nation, all the spirit of her ancient ancestry, all the dignity of her nature, and all the delicacy

of her sex, sparkled in her eyes, glowed on her cheek, swelled in her bosom, and marked her air, whilst she heard the tyrant banditti chief, and the Mahometan dealer settling the price of her purchase, with that of Zeleida, and their attendant, Albion, whom the chief made a point of selling in one lot with his fair captive, equally from motives of superior gain, and security to himself and the purchaser, to whose confidence he disclosed, without reserve from Erina, the manner of his finding, and seizing her, as a necessary caution against the chance of her being discovered and claimed by her friends.

"It is requisite," added the nefarious seller, to the equally nefarious buyer, "that the two Asiatic captives should be as carefully guarded from effecting their liberty, as the European beauty herself, lest the place of her confinement be discovered, and the power of her nation wrest from you a treasure of almost inestimable value."

In addition to this speech, to which the dealer agreed, the chief extolled the charms of the fair captive, as much from the real admiration of her, as from the eager desire of exacting a sum for her purchase equal to his avarice; and the bargain was immediately struck, which made Erina and her

faithful associates, the slaves of a Mahometan master.

Rendered mute by excess of grief, Erina bore her wretched fate with calm woe. Her heart seemed bursting with anguish, her brain felt burning, and her senses confused to such a degree, that the utter derangement of her intellects might really have shortly ensued, had she not happened to hear by chance that she had been purchased for the Prince of Azimabad.

There was a kind of magic in the sound of that well-remembered title, which had the power of rousing her from the torpor of almost maniac melancholy, to collected sorrow, that seemed a species of luxury to her nearly broken heart. The knowledge that she was going to a place where esteem had introduced her, diminished extremely the misery she had experienced, and she could not entertain the least doubt that an appeal to the noble generosity of Jaffier Mahomed, would procure her instant freedom, and an honourable restoration to her friends in perfect safety; for she had such an implicit reliance on the delicacy and principles of the illustrious youth, who had acted in such an exalted manner towards her, as to believe him incapable of taking the smallest advan-

tage of her being completely in his power. Thus persuaded, she almost ceased to regret the unfortunate events which thus unexpectedly promised her a speedy interview with the being on earth she most admired, and had such reason to regard with enthusiasm: and pleasing herself with the anticipation of the meeting, and the reflection that the prince would receive delight from the surprise of seeing her, and having once more the power of rendering her service and felicity, she almost forgot her recent sufferings, and felt no uneasiness, except that arising from the recollection of what her beloved Rosaline would endure on learning, as she must upon enquiry, her extraordinary disappearance from the village, whence she had dispatched intelligence to her friends of her safety, and intended departure for the villa. Erina's feeling mind easily conceived that this second loss of her, would be a painful repetition of the shocks which de Briançon and her loved Rosaline had already experienced several times on her account; and the amiable girl with joy commenced her journey to Azimabad, in the assurance that her arrival there would terminate all her uneasiness and difficulties, and restore her to the bosom of friendship.

Zeleida and Albion, equally delighted with the perspective of pleasure, regained their spirits as

Erina gained her vivacity; and on the evening of the day on which they set out for the place of expected happiness, they reached the city of Azimabad.

Their conveyance was fly-palanquins, which, although curtained round for concealment of the travellers, permitted their having a view of the objects about them, without being themselves seen.

The exhilaration of Erina's spirits rendered this day's journey delightful, and she felt quite enchanted with the rich prospects of a country which abounded in every species of beauty: mountains, woods, water, and the highest cultivation surrounded the city, which rose in magnificence on the declivity of a hill, on whose summit the superb palace of Azimabad spread its spacious arcades, crowned with innumerable domes and spires. As Erina approached the great entrance gate, which, like a triumphal arch, led into the principal court of this equally beautiful, picturesque, and stupendous edifice, she was as much astonished as pleased with all she saw, and knew not whether to admire most, the richly ornamented architecture of the wide ranges of arcades, with their fanciful and superb superstructures, the mag-

nificent colonnade on each side of the square, that led to the wing courts of the palace, displayed at one view from the grand entrance; or the immense retinue of guards, officers of state, and domestic attendants, who, in splendid habits and with rich insignia of pomp, waited in the courts and arcades of this sovereign edifice, which offered at a glance such grandeur, as in Eastern principalities surpasses all regal state elsewhere.

To describe the various sensations that crowded tumultuously into the keenly sensible mind of Erina, would be impossible; but a soul alive to ardent sensibility, a heart endowed with enthusiasm in its affections and tastes, may conceive the sentiments experienced by the energetic girl, on an occasion calculated to awaken the keenest feelings of her nature to their utmost susceptibility. Her immense debt of gratitude to the heir, the very soul, of this sovereignty, as Erina had heard from all quarters that Jaffier Mahomed really was, pressed on her heart in the most animated attachment to the illustrious youth, while the well-remembered personal and mental perfections, that rendered him above human kind in her opinion, excited in her mind an admiration, high as his transcendant qualities, and vivid as her imagination. To behold once more this being, whom she had be-

lieved she should never see again, to be introduced by his esteem to the affectionate attentions of his noble father, and charming mother, whom she had frequently desired to know personally, was delightful even in anticipation; and Erina with joy saw herself carried into an inner court of the palace, which her fancy represented to her as the haven of perfect safety, the secure asylum of virtue, and the abode of all earthly felicity.

Having alighted from the palanquin, she was ushered, with her companion, Zeleida, into the arcades surrounding this court, and thence conducted into a spacious and magnificent apartment, to which the range of piazzas led, and which opened a back colonnade into a delightful garden, amongst whose deep embowering shades, meandering rivulets, expansive lawns and lakes, and serpentine paths, strewed with loveliest flowers, the eye was led to wander in scenes of enchantment, such as poets represent Elysium.

The brilliant sun, now in his decline, illumined this paradise, where beautiful nature, assisted by all the powers of art, combined to charm the senses and the soul. The magnificent apartment, where Erina was desired to repose herself after the fatigues of her journey, occupied the principal

side of the court, facing the superb colonnaded entrance into the quadrangle: and opening into the arcades of the court, and into a spacious colonnade towards the garden, on the opposite side of the apartment, appeared both without and within like a pavillion. The floor of this room was tesselated marble, exhibiting almost every specimen of that beautifully variegated material. The walls between the arches on either side, were entirely covered with mirrors, that reached from the ground to the ceiling, which was richly ornamented with painting in various compartments, enclosed in frame-work, gilded like the frames surrounding the glasses. The furniture of this apartment consisted of silk carpets and pillows for repose, with cushions covered with green velvet, laced and tasselled with gold, for seats; besides vases of china, filled with a profusion of the sweetest flowers.

Erina was assured no person would intrude on the rest she was requested to take in this apartment, where she was left by her conductor undisturbed, to the repose he recommended, and the repast of rice, curry, pillaw, and fruits, which he had ordered to be immediately served to the strangers.

The tranquillity of Erina's mind, the air and

exercise her day's journey had afforded her, the charms of her situation, and the excellence of the viands set before her, induced her to make a better dinner than she had lately taken: but every thing around her, roused her to the pleasure of reflection, rather than sleep after her repast; and, with her faithful companion, she passed an hour of retirement in discoursing on the miraculously fortunate issue of late events, which had seemed to promise ruin and misery, rather than the happiness now in perspective.

"It is thus," said Erina to Zeleida, whom she took every opportunity of instructing by a moral lesson, drawn from the events that occurred to them, "that Heaven rules the world, bringing good out of evil. The providential escapes o mortals from imminent and apparently inevitable destruction that often appears to await them proves incontestably, that their Almighty Creator governs the human affairs of the world.

"The best concerted measures of mankind frequently fail unaccountably: at other times, their utmost care to prevent events, seems only to accelerate them: our hopes turn to disappointment—our disappointments prove themselves advantages. From this, let mortals learn perfect de-

pendance on Providence, and entire contentment under every distress."

Before the sun was set, a female attendant waited on Erina to conduct her to the bath, which she was glad to indulge in after her late fatigues, and the heat of the day. The bathing-house was built over a stream of water that supplied a lake, situated in a woody valley, seen from the pavilion-room. A winding walk, overshadowed with bocul trees, and other odoriferous flowering shrubs, intermingled with rose-bushes and myrtles, led from the colonnade to the bath; and as Erina passed along to it, she walked over a carpet of flowers, which the bounteous hand of nature continually scattered in this arborous path, in a shower of sweet scented blossoms. The perfumes exhaled around, the refreshing shade, and the warble of innumerable birds, rendered the place a perfect paradise: and Erina's sensibility, ever alive to the charms of nature, the pleasures of taste, and the delights of sentiment, had now free scope to indulge in the perfect union of external and intellectual enjoyment, where each aided the other to sensations of ecstasy.

Although anxious to ask a thousand questions about Jaffier Mahomed and his illustrious parents,

Erina concealed her solicitude from the attendant, having concerted with Zeleida not to evince any knowledge of the prince, lest it might lead to his discovery of his captives previous to his interview with them, in which Erina intended to make herself known by surprise, and thus increase mutual pleasure in this meeting.

The woman who waited on the strangers was so much occupied in admiration of Erina, and so intent on the office delegated to her care of adorning the fair beauty, that she confined her conversation solely to the business of decoration: and having been desired by the chief of the eunuchs to dress the fair slave in the most splendid and becoming apparel that the haram afforded, she had brought a magnificent Eastern habit, which she insisted on Erina's assuming.

Although pleased to be accommodated with a change of clothes, after having been under the necessity of wearing her own, without the possibility of getting them washed, since she was stolen from the villa, unprovided with any convenience of her wardrobe, yet Erina could not reconcile herself to the idea of wearing the Indian costume now presented to her, as she perceived it would

expose her much more than her delicacy thought decorous.

The whole dress consisted of a pair of blue sarsnet pantaloons, embroidered in silver, with a short tight tunic of fine muslin, to be worn over a small bodice of the same silk as the pantaloons. The tunic was made with a sleeve so very short, as to expose the arm nearly to the shoulder; and notwithstanding it clasped high over the bosom, it could conceal nothing of her form, neither hide the lovely fairness of her skin, which emulated the lily, on her polished neck. Asiatic slippers, embroidered all over with silver, and to be worn without stockings, she was also obliged to put on with the other parts of her light and picturesque habiliments; and was also compelled to let her attendant attire her with broad and numerous bracelets, armlets, necklaces, and ancle ornaments of gold, with large ear pendants of the same, besides a gold bodkin to fasten up her beautiful hair, which the woman insisted on combing, scenting, and binding up in the Indian mode, resembling the antique Grecian style.

Thus habited, she almost shrunk from the eyes of her intimate companion, Zeleida, and from

the gaze of her strange attendant, to whom this dress was perfectly familiar: and, on getting a glance of herself in the mirrors of her apartment, she blushed scarlet deep, at the idea of being seen by the prince in such a garb, although obliged by absolute compulsion to assume it; for her earnest entreaty to be allowed the long robe, which some of the Moorish women occasionally wear, met with a positive refusal from the chief eunuch, who thought the short dress allotted to Erina the most advantageous, because it displayed entirely the symmetry of her exquisitely lovely form; and the only alteration she could obtain in her apparel was a long veil of silver gauze, so transparent as not to conceal her figure, notwithstanding she enveloped herself completely in the loose flowing drapery.

Zeleida was also provided with a change of garments: and their attire was no sooner completed, than they were informed that the prince was coming to pay his visit of welcome to the strangers.—On this intimation, Erina experienced innumerable and powerful emotions. The delightful expectation of seeing immediately, the being she so highly admired and regarded, would have communicated a joy bordering on ecstasy, had not the awkwardness of her situation and dress, alloyed the pleasure

anticipated in the interview, which she waited in a fluctuation of hope and dread, that made her tremble and change colour alternately, as if the damask rose and snowy lily strove with each other for the empire in her cheek.

In momentary expectation of seeing Jaffier Mahomed appear, Erina and Zeleida drew their veils over their faces, and soon heard advancing footsteps, which announced the approach of their promised visitor, in whom they were astonished to behold the aspect of a swarthy moor, instead of the fair and god-like Jaffier Mahomed.

Shocked by the ferocious countenance of the man before her, whom Erina would have supposed to be one of the guards of the palace, had not his dress proclaimed him of sovereign rank, she averted her eyes from the scrutinizing stare of her unknown visitor, who continued for some time to gaze upon her with a look of licentious freedom, whilst the timid object of his admiration stood in silent trouble and dismay at the disappointment she had experienced.

A fulsome panegyric on her beauty, was the first sentence addressed to Erina, which com-

pleted the grief the first glance of her strange visitor had inspired; and unable to repress her feelings, she thus addressed him:

"A perfect stranger to the person, and entirely ignorant of the character of him to whose humanity I am about to make an appeal, I feel myself embarrassed by a situation as distressing as it is humiliating.

"A free-born Briton, reduced to confinement, and even to slavery, solicits from the generosity of the sovereign of this principality, into whose power she has unjustly and most nefariously been delivered, emancipation from ignominious bondage. Let your compassion become interested in my behalf. Let pity move you to commiserate in me an unhappy creature, disappointed in the hope of meeting in you a well known and highly valued friend. Fortune, which had repeatedly brought the amiable prince of Azimabad, Jaffier Mahomed, to relieve me from peril and distress, had now, I flattered myself, thrown me a dependant on his well-proved noble generosity, in which I placed the firmest reliance.

"Why I am disappointed in not seeing my highly-esteemed protector, whom I expected to behold under the title of Prince of Azimabad,

appears to me incomprehensible; to you I refer for an explanation of what seems to me mysterious; requesting, at the same time, pity and information on the subject of my distress."

The coarse features of Erina's unknown visitor assumed a stern expression whilst she addressed him. Instead of the compassion she had hoped to move, her apprehension read in the powerful working of his severe countenance all the passions that degrade human nature; and thus addressing her, he spoke at once his dispositions and daggers to her every feeling:

"In me behold the Prince of Azimabad, the reigning sovereign of this state, and thy master.

"Learn, slave of my pleasure, that the ignoble youth your praise would deify, no longer lives the favourite of a deluded father, and the idol of a mother; who tempting her son to form a Christian marriage, such as she had seduced his parent into, could have subverted the ancient laws, and in time the religion also of this sovereignty. Mahomet has preserved his faithful followers from impending misfortune; Alla has removed the father of Jaffier Mahomed from the state his weakness would have betrayed to misery; and I, the

eldest born of that father, stand the rightfully acknowledged heir to the principality of Azimabad, supported by the suffrages of a people justly indignant at their wrongs. Those who maintain my power have proscribed the late usurper of my rights; and Jaffier Mahomed, whom I disdain to acknowledge as my brother, deprived of the riches parental indulgence lavished on him, now wanders an outcast from his incensed country; whose inhabitants, unanimously loyal to my rule, have set a high price on the head of Jaffier, as a traitor to this state; while his mother, in the imprisonment she merits, pays to my vengeance the penalty of my injuries, that I owed to her influence over my weak father."

Thunderstruck by this intelligence, Erina wrung her hands in speechless agony; not more anguished by her own dreadful and hopeless situation, reduced to be the ignominious slave of such a wicked despot, than at the reflection of the admirable Jaffier's sufferings, and those of his mother, whom his filial adoration had represented as an angel, and whom his praises had inspired Erina to revere, as a personification of every virtue.

The calm, yet deep despair, depicted in the countenance and gestures of Erina, roused the law-

less passions of the tyrant before her to their utmost fury; and seizing the screaming victim of his power with a rude grasp, he thus addressed her:

"I read in the expression of your face, that you are the object to whom Jaffier Mahomed would have sacrificed his country's laws. The wish I had to have thee in my power is fortunately fulfilled. Justice demands that life which thy beauty woos my pity to save; a desire to possess thy charms urges me to swear thou shalt not meet death from me. I vow by Mahomet to preserve thee; and by saving thy justly forfeited life, I bind thee doubly my slave."

"Thou canst not enslave my soul," cried Erina, roused to speak from indignation.

"Have a care," replied the ferocious despot, frowning terrifically, "lest thou provoke me to the sure vengeance within my sovereign power. Learn to repay me with gratitude, or thou shalt repent thy stubborn pride. Thy person is mine by purchase, thy mind must also be the slave of my will, which saves thy life from the sword of Justice, which the laws of this state ought to sharpen, for the execution of every person who has

endangered the subversion of its government. Thy being a Christian renders thee in this territory amenable to the condemnation of the Mahometan laws; but my clemency protects thee from their rigour. I swear by our holy Prophet himself, thou shalt not die; but I will not at the same time permit my passion to blind me so far as to make thee my only wife; such weakness is beneath my firm soul: I will not act as my father has done, and his unworthy son Jaffier would have done; no, in my conduct Azimabad shall once more behold a worthy descendant of an illustrious race of Mahometan princes. In me the subjects of this ancient state shall see a man worthy to fill the throne of despotic sway; in me my people shall recognize a prince whom the supremest beauty cannot enslave; and the state I rule shall acknowledge me fitter to command, than the youth who would have submitted himself to the entire government of that woman, whom I retain as my humble slave amongst innumerable fellow-captives in my haram."

"And dost thou exalt thyself above the laws of thy state and of thy religion also," cried Erina contemptuously, "and yet conduct thyself superior to Jaffier, who revered his every duty?

"Learn, tyrant, that the being thou callest the slave of thy pleasure, the humble servant of thy will, despises thee as much as to prefer the most ignominious death, or the cruellest lingering punishment thy ferocity could inflict, to the most sovereign dominion over thee, or to the entire possession of thy boasted wealth and sceptre of princely command."

"Darest thou thus insult my dignity, and provoke my power?" demanded the stern despot.

"I have courage to dare thy utmost vengeance," cried Erina, smiling disdain.

"Then learn the fate thou bravest," ejaculated the tyrant, frowning terror.

"I brave the most direful torments which a Mahometan monster can devise against a Christian," said the pious girl, falling on her knees, and kissing the crucifix pendant at her bosom; and whilst the half-astonished and half-intimidated wretch, to whom she addressed herself with firmness inspired with devotion, stood in irresolute reflection on the dark purposes of his soul; Erina, collecting fortitude from the aid of Virtue, calmly added, "Yes! I brave the power of a cruel in-

fidel, and, supported by Christian faith, willingly would die a martyr to my innocence and the cross."

Zeleida, through her streaming tears, beheld with enthusiasm the triumph of Christianity; and as she gazed on the saint-like expression which irradiated the beautiful countenance of her instructress to celestial loveliness, the young convert to Erina's faith resolved to follow her example, and die rather than betray her virtue, or forsake the symbol of her present religious belief.

Erina, sensible of a miraculous support, still on her knees supplicated the Divine aid, of which she felt the importance. Her hands were clasped and raised to Heaven in earnest prayer, whilst her dark scowling persecutor revolved in silence the fullest gratification of his demoniac passions; then, after deep deliberation, he uttered thus the purpose of his malevolent soul:

"The death thou suest 'tis my pleasure to deny: I let thee live to prove that thou art the slave of my will.

"Thou shalt be mine — mine unwooed; I scorn to act my brother's part in being thy sub-

missive lover: I will be thy tyrant, and know a means to make thee humble. Removed from this fair dwelling, and this paradise of nature's charms, thy abode shall be a dreary dungeon till thy proud spirit owns my power, and sues my vengeance to relent."

Thus saying, he left his mute and weeping captive with a look of satanic fury, that spoke him capable of all enormities and every barbarity.

As Erina stood in silent horror, revolving in her mind the sudden and unforeseen changes of this world, in which the king, equally with the beggar, seems the sport of misery, a guard of eunuchs entered, seized and chained her and her companion, and hurried them into separate cells of a dreary prison. These cells were small, furnished only with a coarse mat, which served the wretched captives for a seat, bed, and table, on which to eat their miserable portion of rice and water, the sole food allowed them. Each of these cells opened by a grated iron gate into a small court; and each prisoner, excluded entirely from the view of the sky by the amazing height of a massy surrounding wall, saw the wretchedness of their situation increased and multiplied in the sufferings of their fellow-prisoners.

When Erina was led to her solitary confinement the evening was closing, and the shades of approaching night added, if possible, to the melancholy of her situation. No light was allowed her except to eat the portion of coarse food set before her as a supper, which the anguish of her mind would have prevented her tasting, even had the most delicious viands solicited her palate. With the removal of her untasted morsel, the lamp, which by its faint glimmer had afforded her a full view of her comfortless cell, was carried away by the attendant eunuch; and Erina was left in total darkness and solitude, to reflections which might have driven her to madness, had not religion administered its sovereign balm to tranquillize each worldly woe with prospects of a blessed futurity.

After performing her nightly devotions, Erina threw herself on the mat, not to sleep, but watch the night's advance and coming morning. All those she loved came to her thoughts, were seen in fancy, and past and distant scenes became present to imagination. Her grandsire's silver head bent by parental affliction—her mother weeping her widowed state, uncheered by the presence of a lamented daughter, cruelly lost for ever—her brother, doomed to pine in hopeless love, wasting

his youth in withered bloom, mourning the eternal separation from Seraphina, Wilmot, and a lost sister—Seraphina herself, unblessed by Friendship's consolatory power, regretting the absence of her first and dearest friends—Rosaline, torn by despair for the loss of that companion, for whose sake she had sacrificed her virgin liberty, and become an exile from her loved country, perhaps for ever—Wilmot, deprived of every solace, suffering all a melancholy pilgrim's hardships, to live uncomforted, or meet an untimely fate in foreign fields of horrid battle—Jaffier Mahomed, so lately possessed of princely state, so blessed in blessing, idolized as a son, courted as an illustrious hero, resplendent as the rising sun, with all the promise of a long life of glory, renown, and every earthly felicity, that godlike youth, now orphaned, houseless, villified by an usurping, infamous brother, proscribed as an outlaw, pursued by the subjects of the departed father he revered, and torn by filial anguish for the hapless fate of the mother he adored. All these views pressed on the mind of Erina in agonizing reflections; and in the complicated miseries of those she loved, the feeling girl experienced a heavy accumulation of her own woes.

Whilst bedewing her hard bed with tears of an-

guish, as fancy pourtrayed her sorrows, past and future, with the distresses of her loved friends, in highly-coloured and strongly-delineated pictures on imagination to mental vision, her ear was roused to attention by an almost uninterrupted succession of deep sighs, groans, and the lamentations of a soft, sweet voice, as if in plaintive soliloquy, and at intervals raised in the fervour of earnest devotion. To these sounds Erina listened some time without being able to hear distinctly more than the murmur of articulation, until drawing close to the grated gate on the side whence the voice seemed to come, the ejaculation of " O Jaffier! O my son!" uttered in a burst of sobbing anguish, informed the keenly feeling girl that the adored mother of the illustrious youth, idolised by her gratitude and admiration as the first of men, was not only her fellow-prisoner, but her neighbour in confinement. Erina's soul was ever awake to sympathize with the distressed; the lamentations of a stranger, even of an enemy, would have pained her heart; dreadfully now was that heart wrung with the complaints that bitter affliction drew from the bosom of the mother of Jaffier Mahomed! Each sigh, every moan, caught by Erina's attentive ear, commemorated to her all the perfections of the lamented youth, and the innumerable obligations his noble generosity and

kindness had heaped upon her; and the grateful girl united her sighs to those she heard, that fate had cruelly denied her the only consolation her situation admitted in that place, namely, the consolation of mingling her tears with those of the suffering mother of her admirable protector, and talking of the godlike being, for whose preservation they each now offered up their prayers.

After a tedious night of misery the dawn found Erina still bathed in tears; she paid her morning devotions at sunrise, and lamented, rather than rejoiced, at the cessation of all complaints from the neighbouring cell, under an apprehension that the mother of Jaffier had breathed her last groan. "Yet why grieve," thought Erina, "when I ought rather to feel consolation in the idea, that the sufferings of virtue are terminated in eternal joys." Whilst employed in this reflection, she beheld her jailer approach and unlock her grate. As he set before her a scanty portion of dry rice and a pitcher of water, she thought she perceived a glance of compassion steal from his eye; and as her observation traced, in the wrinkled visage of the aged eunuch, marks of a benign disposition, she saluted him kindly; upon which the old man sighing, bid Alla bless her, and retired apparently much moved. Hope, that ever-reviving mental

balm, once more sprung up in Erina's mind, like the early blossom of the vernal season which peeps from the bosom of surrounding snows, and expands its tender leaves to the nipping blast that scatters frost in its icy breath. So blew the flower of hope in Erina's youthful breast, where anxiety and terror fluctuating reigned in chilling sensations; and the perspective of her life, like a winter sky, lowered in the gloom of threatening storms.

From the grated entrance of her cell, she saw into those on the other sides of the court; and had a melancholy view of many imprisoned wretches, all of her own sex. Their appearance denoted them to be attendants; and as she observed them all turn frequent and anxious regards towards the spot near her, whence she imagined the voice of Jaffier's mother had proceeded, Erina conjectured the females she saw must be the late attendants of the unfortunate princess; and she watched their looks with scrutinizing anxiety, in hopes of learning if the object of their attention still lived.

This interesting occupation so completely absorbed her all the morning, as to make the time pass less tediously than she could have supposed, until the eunuch appeared to serve the prisoners' dinner.

As he set Erina's miserable pittance before her, she again accosted him with a kind salutation, which the old man returned with a look of such commiseration, as induced aninquiry relative to the mother of Jaffier. At their mention the aged eunuch's eyes filled with tears: and regarding Erina with an expression of surprise, he demanded how she had become acquainted with the two illustrious persons, of whom she spoke in terms that led him to imagine they were intimately known to her. In answer to this question, Erina briefly informed the old man of her acquaintance with Prince Jaffier, and the lively interest she felt for him and his hapless parent; whose lamentations she had heard on the preceding night.

Erina's humane hearer wept at her recital; and assured her his beloved noble mistress yet lived, but in a languid state, that promised speedy dissolution. "Alas!" cried he, wiping away the tears that rapidly chased each other down his furrowed cheeks, "when the princess expires, all my happiness dies with her. I should wish to lay my aged bones in her tomb; and all her good subjects would desire, like her old favourite Ismael, to follow her to the grave, were it not for the hope of living to avenge her wrongs, and see her son, our admirable prince, assert his rights, and punish the usurper Mamoud Cawn."

" How," interrupted Erina, " have not the people of Azimabad proscribed the exiled prince, and set a price upon his head?"

" By the corruption of the reigning tyrant," replied Ismael, in a low voice, and looking round him, as if afraid of being detected in treason, " some wicked wretches have been bribed to the shameful acts you mention: and a set of infuriated miscreants have deluded a part of the people to think ill of their late idol, Jaffier, from the misrepresentations of demagogues, employed by his perfidious brother to calumniate the exiled prince, his late father, his unhappy mother, and all those attached to the late government.

" The public mind is kept in intoxication, and is so overawed by the known cruelty of the tyrannical usurper, that the part of the community which is most firm in adherence to the proscribed prince, are intimidated by the spies of those in power from breathing a sentiment against Mamoud Cawn, who has executed many for the bare endeavour of exculpating Jaffier Mahomed from the allegation of his wish to subvert the government by his marriage with a European and a Christian."

" Alas!" cried Erina, weeping and wringing

her hands, "can it be indeed true, that the amiable prince's attachment to me has caused his ruin?"

"Are you indeed the lady beloved so tenderly and enthusiastically by our adored Jaffier Mahomed!" demanded Ismael in anxious surprise.

"Yes!" ejaculated Erina, sighing—"you behold in me the being whom that godlike youth repeatedly interfered miraculously to save from destruction; you see in me the object of his esteem; unhappily doomed perpetually to occasion the misery and misfortune of those who serve her most, and whom she most regards."

"Alla be praised," exclaimed Ismael, throwing himself at Erina's feet in the most obsequious Eastern salutation, "Alla be praised," he repeated, "that my aged eyes are blessed, ere death closes them, with the sight of my beloved prince's adored object. Your beauty, lady, would have told me you were the peerless virgin of Jaffier's love, had not my sight been dimmed with age and tears, and my observation been nearly paralized by sorrow.

"Oh! that my noble mistress, the princess,

could behold the valued and lovely object of her son's affection. How often has her maternal feelings made her long to behold you! How often has she condescended to talk to me of her son's attachment! The princess regarded me particularly as the attendant of the prince's infancy. My arms have borne the idol of Azimabad, abroad to the gaze of a loyal and almost worshipping people; and I taught the tongue of Jaffier to salute and bless those subjects of his father, who now rebel against the will of their loved sovereign in submitting themselves to the tyranny of an usurper! Yes, lady, the last breath of Jaffier's father proclaimed him the successor to his throne. Yet Mamoud reigns—and I live, alas! to hear the only joy and hope of the state, exiled from his rightful hereditary dominions, by that wicked brother, who, from childhood, owed every thing to Jaffier's generosity; for his father loved not Mamoud, because of his unamiable character. That character, Jaffier ever endeavoured to correct, and defend from public obloquy and parental dislike. And I, who daily saw the malice and cruelty of Mamoud Cawn, and was the constant witness of his brother's innumerable virtues, live to see the rightful heir proscribed, at the decree of his nefarious and usurping brother. I am still spared, to witness in my old age, the wrecks of legally constituted authority, the

subversion of order, the oppression of virtue. Whilst all the ancient domestics of the palace are crushed, I, even more cruelly used than the massacred attendants of the late sovereigns, am doomed to exist and behold my mistress perishing in prison, and her darling son proclaimed an outlaw by those whom Jaffier's and his parents' goodness protected and blessed. And although verging to the tomb, with the steps of lingering and decrepit age, I may yet live to see the deluded populace of Azimabad, hail with impious acclamations the seizure of Jaffier, and insult with the ignominy of public and cruel execution, their legal sovereign, at the instigation of the usurper and bloody tyrant of his country!"

The old man wept like a child at the conclusion of this speech, which had so strongly affected Erina as to make her groan with agonizing horror, and wring her hands in all the frenzied action of despair.

Ismael viewed her in the meanwhile with mingled pity, admiration, and grief. The utmost sorrows of age are calm, compared to those of youth; and the eunuch, though plunged in the deepest affliction he could feel, was sufficiently composed to speak consolation to the being, whom a warm and

loyal attachment to Jaffier had enshrined in his aged and faithful soul, in an affection such as a father experiences for a beloved daughter. Whilst the old man endeavoured to tranquillize Erina, she thus addressed him: "Talk not, my venerable companion in distress—talk not of comfort to me, who am implicated in the wide-spreading misery I behold in all its horrors. Alas! I feel conscious of being the cause, although an innocent one, of Jaffier Mahomed's protracted absence from his country. But for me he would long since have returned to the bosom of his home, where his presence would have checked all lawless proceedings; and had not his unfortunate attachment to me existed, there could have been no pretence for the usurpation of his rights."

"Wretch as I feel," continued Erina weeping, "in beholding the misery I have contributed to occasion, no consolation remains for me, except that of weeping, praying, and dying with the mother of Jaffier. Tell me, Ismael, if that consolation be within my reach? But why do I doubt it? You are my gaoler, and therefore may lead me to the neighbouring cell of the unhappy princess, introduce me to her knowledge, and thus afford me the luxury of mingling my tears and uniting my prayers with her's."

"I will do it," said the eunuch, "although my life should be the forfeit of an act, which, if it come to the tyrant's knowledge, his cruelty would consider treason. Each of the attendants he employs are bribed to be a spy on the actions of his fellows. No man, thus situated, dare reckon on the fidelity of a brother—my associates may betray me; but what of that! I set no value on my life, but that of serving my loved princess, and would rejoice to lose it in procuring her a comfort; therefore, lady, follow me."

Thus saying, Erina's guard was about to unclose the grate for her egress from the cell. Much as she desired this interview, she would not purchase her gratification at the expense of Ismael's risk. Erina respected in him the attendant of Jaffier's infancy, the favourite of his mother, and could not think of exposing her amiable guard to the chance of being detected in a forbidden indulgence by any of the numerous eunuchs, who had the care of the prison; and whom envy, pique, or interest, might tempt to betray the old man to the cruel tyrant. She therefore declined the offered favour of being personally introduced to the princess; and contented herself with commissioning Ismael to deliver a message from her to her highness, fraught with every sentiment that could render it consolatory to each.

Ismael returned in a short time with an answer to Erina's address, to which the aged ambassador's feelings had done ample justice in the delivery; and the same sentiment of tender interest rendered the old man quite eloquent in expressing all he was charged to say to Erina, which confirmed her admiration and affection for the mother of Jaffier.

After many miserable days confinement in this dreary prison, during which her own sufferings were considerably augmented by the intelligence that her fellow captive Zeleida and the princess were gradually consuming with a fever, which must speedily terminate fatally, unless checked in its progress, Erina was shocked and surprised by the entrance of Mamoud Cawn, more terrific in his aspect than on his first interview with her. Then he had appeared with the hope to please and win a lovely object; now he came to alarm her, and revenge himself for the firm obduracy which had so long disappointed his desires, contrary to his expectations.

Inflamed by the view of charms, which sorrow could not tarnish, the tyrant forgot his rage, in the ardour of passion, as he gazed on the beautiful Erina, who stood in mute anguish before him. Dismissing his attendant eunuchs with a sign, he

approached, and caught Erina in his arms; who, shrieking, seized the crease, or dagger, in his girdle, and pointing it at the tyrant's breast, made him retreat from the rude hold he was too cowardly to retain, when threatened even by a female hand, armed with the weapon of defence.

Relinquishing his grasp, he would have called in the guard of eunuchs to his aid, had he not felt ashamed of owing to them his protection and conquest of a female slave, conscious how much the story of such an act might lower him in public estimation; the infinite importance of maintaining a character of courage, to establish himself in the throne he had usurped, made him anxious to conceal his natural pusillanimity; and, according to its dictates, and the suggestions of prudence, he resolved to adopt the plan of humbly fawning, to carry the point, he failed in spirit to attempt by force, that exposed him to danger.

As he began basely to cringe and flatter, Erina saw in his mean weakness the power of an easy triumph. She beheld with equal contempt and abhorrence the licentious sycophant, the cruel brother, the usurping tyrant, humbled to fawn at the foot of the being he had insulted and threatened: and, firmly grasping the poinard, which gave

her such a command over the despicable wretch, she would have felt an inclination to avenge herself, the injured Jaffier and his mother, who were the victims of his cruelty, and by a daring blow seek freedom for herself, and assert the rights of the lawful heir to the country, enslaved by the tyranny of an usurper, had she not borne in mind, that vengeance belongs not to an individual; and that the power of Heaven is supreme to punish guilt. Impressed by this conviction, Erina sheathed the dagger in her cestus, as a weapon of defence, the only use she thought herself authorized as a christian to employ it in. And relying on the protection of an over-ruling Providence, Erina listened in calm disdain to the fulsome flattery of the base fawner, to whom she thus addressed herself in a definitive reply to all the disgusting promises of every favour she could demand being instantly granted, if she would listen to his suit:

"Think not, tyrant, to move me either by flattery or threats. To each I am alike invulnerable. Thou knowest but little of my soul, if thou believe that any selfish consideration could tempt me so to degrade myself, as to listen complacently to, or to enter into any terms, with the wretch polluted with every crime. Know, that from the vile oppressor of a brother, the ferocious monster, who

could retain in languishing imprisonment, the relict of his father, and cruelly insult myself, I scorn all favour."

"What!" cried the wily villain, reading her character of superior and heroic virtue in her looks and words, "wouldest thou refuse my offer of immediate emancipation of thyself, and all thy fellow captives from this prison, if, as the terms of releasing Jaffier's mother, her attendants, and thy companion, whom I purchased with thee, to the liberty of the princess's palace, where thou might enjoy thyself with them, I required no more than the pleasure of seeing thee, and the permission to hope thy future favour?"

Erina, moved by the only proposition capable of gaining her attention, fixed a look of mingled emotion on the crafty being, who thus continued to allure her to his snare by a recapitulation of, and an addition to the proposal already offered, in these terms. "I permit thee to quit this prison with all those now confined in it. I will farther indulge thee with permission to accompany the princess to her apartments in the palace, to which she shall be instantly restored in all the splendour to which she has been accustomed. I will, in addition to all those favours, promise lenity to Jaffier,

who will doubtless soon be found, wherever he may have concealed himself from pursuit, upon condition of thy compliance in future with my wishes. Remember, fair virgin, the extent of my bounty, and be grateful for it, as thou valuest the lives of those whom my will leaves entirely dependant on thy conduct."

Thus saying, he quitted the cell, congratulating himself on having the means to make the object of his passion subservient to his desires, and leaving Erina nearly distracted by the cruel alternative to which she was reduced, of yielding herself to the will of a detested despot, or of sacrificing to his dreadfullest vengeance those she felt herself bound by the strongest moral and religious obligations to protect. The languishing Zeleida, the faithful companion of her misfortunes, the suffering mother of Jaffier, and her heroic protector himself, appeared to the feeling mind of Erina oppressed with the direst misery, and her heart bled for their distress. That distress she might alleviate; and this idea was balm to her sensibility. She might perhaps avert future as well as present evils; and, under this hope, she allowed herself to be led from her cell to that of the princess, though shuddering at the consequences.

Words are inadequate to do justice to their interview. But those emotions, which all description must fail to depict, may be conceived by an acutely feeling mind.

Erina, irradiated nearly in celestial loveliness by the virtues of her heroic soul, appeared to the adoring mother of Jaffier as an angel sent from Heaven to console and deliver her from torment: and as Erina led her from the comfortless cell of a dreary prison to all the splendour of a magnificent palace, and beheld the tear of gratitude and affection trembling in the fine eyes of Jaffier's charming mother, the lovely girl lost almost in the enjoyment of the moment, the remembrance at how dear a rate she might purchase the blessing of relieving and protecting the mother of her preserver; but when the princess demanded to what she was indebted for the joy of such an unexpected deliverance, Erina shuddered, and her blood ran cold with horror at the recollection of the high purchase expected for their emancipation, and the indulgence of being together. Shocked as she was, at the prospect before her, she concealed it carefully from the princess, fearful of checking the pleasure she had been so happy to afford her; and giving the anxious maternal bosom, she felt it particularly her duty to tranquillize, all the comfort

in her power to inspire, relative to the safety of Jaffier, without the most distant hint at the conditions on which the usurper's lenity had been promised, Erina earnestly supplicated Heaven for the support, direction, and fortitude, her trials might require; gathering consolation from the consciousness of affording peace to the mother of her preserver. From the united motives of principle and affection, the amiable girl attended the princess with all the tender assiduity of a daughter; and when she saw her countenance illumined with a ray of reviving hope, that her darling son might live in security, although wronged of his succession; and saw that renovated hope had checked the progress of a malady that would soon have been fatal, without the comforts, assistance, and care Erina afforded, she rejoiced in having been the means of saving Jaffier and his mother to bless each other: and on looking back upon the train of events, by which she had been instrumental in snatching de l'Armencour from a sudden death to repentance; and protecting her illustrious friends from extremity of misery and imminent destruction, she lamented not the difficulties and unhappiness she had encountered, from her endeavours to be useful; and felt that *no apprehension of evil to ourselves, should deter us from the performance of what we consider incumbent on us as Christians to do,*

since we are called on to pursue our duty steadily without regard to consequences. Leaving them to an over-ruling Providence, we should consider perfect obedience and pious trust indispensable; and relying on Heaven's care to avert threatened misfortunes, or to support us under every suffering Supreme Wisdom sees fit to try us with, we may rest assured the consciousness of having performed our duty, will console us for every distress that can befal us, in consequence of our fulfilment of an obligation.

CHAP. VIII.

" To be contented with the decrees of Heaven; to place a firm reliance on Supreme Wisdom, as the infallible judge of what is best for us; to be grateful for past blessings by kissing the hand that chastises us; remembering, in our highest enjoyments, that happiness unalloyed is not the lot of mortals; and recollecting, amidst the severest calamities, that in proportion to our patient endurance of trials, there is a sure reward for the faithful beyond human conception: these are the indispensable duties of a Christian."

THE numerous suites of spacious and splendidly furnished apartments belonging to the princess, and which she was now permitted to inhabit with Erina and Zeleida, in the pomp to which she had been accustomed, occupied the three sides of a square, into which they opened by a range of arcades. This large quadrangular court led through a magnificent colonnade into the grand place, or arena, of that part of the palace inha-

bited by the sovereign of Azimabad. The prince's dwelling rose in stupendous elevation in the principal side, with immense colonnades, domes, and turrets, exhibiting all the rich and picturesque effect of the most superb Moorish architecture. In the side of the great square, opposite to the grand façade appropriated to the prince's use, were the apartments for the officers of his court, with the public offices on each side of the great entrance into the grand place of the palace: over this principal entrance, which appeared extremely noble, like a triumphal arch, the superstructure of an amazing lofty, dome-crowned tower elevated itself in eastern and sovereign grandeur; in the several stages of which spacious chambers, colonnaded all round, opened towards the palace, and also towards the city, which each apartment in this tower proudly overlooked from its elevated site on the summit of the hill. In the upper story of this front tower was the durbar, or hall of audience, council, and justice, to which two magnificent flights of stairs conducted on either side of the grand gateway. The durbar opening all round into a broad gallery, supported by columns in a peristyle, led by a large archway on each side of the hall, upon a terrace ballustraded round that formed the roof of these apartments, dedicated to the public offices of the court. From

this terracce, and the durbar, built on the same level, was seen the whole city stretched below on the declivity of the hill, which commanded a view over an amazing extent of country, enriched with every thing that could render the prospect variously delightful.

Opposite to the colonnades, leading into the court of the princess's palace, there was a similar entrance into another square, corresponding in architecture; which, in the reign of the late sovereign, had been appropriated to the abode of his two sons; but which the present tyrant, on the usurpation of the principality, converted into a haram, for the numerous female slaves his licentious disposition required to be collected from every country, where women could be procured celebrated for beauty. The seraglio of Mamoud, in the short time since his accession to the supreme command at Azimabad, had been replenished from Persia, Arabia, Armenia, Georgia, and all the countries of India; and the governor of the haram had given a high price for Erina, from the consideration that her superior charms would be cheaply purchased at the great sum demanded for her. Mamoud, on beholding her, pronounced the beauteous European the greatest treasure he possessed, and bent all his thoughts to

win her to his purpose, of rendering her the most submissive, as she was the loveliest of his slaves. At first he had conceived hopes of intimidating her to obedience to his desires: finding her, however, too firm to yield by threats, he visited her in prison to force her to his wishes, when her spirited resistance compelled him to have recourse to all he imagined likely to effect his intentions, without danger of awakening her to the determined vengeance of which he believed her capable.

Mamoud Cawn possessed all the cunning of a feeble villain; artful as he was pusillanimous, wary as he was weak, and destitute of every principle, he left no means untried to gratify his passions with safety to himself. He readily saw into, and grasped at the power of rendering every one subservient to his will; and perceiving the nobleness of Erina's soul, he conjectured that the most effectual way of moving her, would be to make the emancipation from prison of those whose fate she so feelingly lamented, a condition for her yielding to him. The effect such a proposition produced on her, induced Mamoud to try the expedient of permitting her to see and live with the princess; and moreover to promise lenity to Jaffier, under a persuasion that such a measure, which he in-

tended should be proclaimed, would lure him into his power; when the tyrant might have the double advantage of holding the rightful heir in confinement, and thus secure to himself the government he had usurped, whilst his unhappy brother, and the maid of his ardent love, would each be induced to every concession required of them, to save the other from his dreaded vengeance, which he would hold over them in threats of perpetual terror, to render them both subservient to his ambition for rule, and his passion for Erina's beauty. The life of Jaffier's mother the tyrant also believed was a circumstance that would strengthen his hands, for an additional security of his two-fold plan, to establish himself in command, and to gain possession of the present first idol of his desires.

Thus, from motives of cruelty, and the most nefarious designs, the princess and Erina were allowed to inhabit, in all the pomp of sovereignty, the palace which the late prince had erected for the residence of his idolized consort.

Every thing in this abode displayed, in the highest taste, all possible eastern magnificence. It was in this place splendour and elegance had concentered whatever could charm; and it was here that the usurper enthroned himself in the

fullest luxury, and where he entertained himself with the beauties of his haram; and it was, therefore, to this spot the governor of the seraglio conducted Erina on her first coming, as the account of her loveliness had inspired the licentious tyrant with the wish of an immediate interview with her.

The pavilion apartment opposite to the colonnaded entrance into this quadrangular of the palace, into which Erina had been shewn on her first arrival, communicated by a folding-door at each end into the various chambers built round the square. These ranges of apartments, both on the ground and upper story, were magnificent in architecture, and superbly furnished. The upper chamber, over the central pavilion room, facing the entrance into the square, rose in equal height with the lofty tower above the gateway to the principal court of the palace, and, surrounded by a gallery supported by columns in a peristyle, opened on each side upon a balustrated terrace, which formed the roof of the princess's palace. From this central and elevated apartment, which was crowned with a dome, and from the terrace, that led round three sides of the square, and was terminated by a circular turret built at either end of the colonnade, was seen an extensive and varied

prospect. The middle and principal square of the sovereign's palace, and the opposite court of the second wing palace, in perspective, exhibited on one side all the magnificence of sumptuous architecture; on the other hand was beheld the diversified view of the wide-stretched gardens, that surrounded every part of the three palaces, except the central front, or grand entrance to the principal square. Beyond the shades and lawns of these delightful gardens, where the eye wandered over every diversity of nature's charms, the sight took in at one glance the whole city of Azimabad, with its mosques, and the adjacent country, stretching into the aërial distance of perspective, interspersed with Moorish buildings and Hindoo pagodas.

The long range of building appropriated to the sovereign's residence, rose three stories high above every other part of the edifice, with an immense dome in the middle of the structure towering over the other three domes, and the four turrets in the angles of the principal square.

Imagination, in its loftiest flight, and most extensive range, could not picture a scene of superior taste and magnificence, than was here presented to the view, which, in every direction, offered

sights to exalt the fancy, and delight the mind with the most elevated ideas of all that was charming in nature, elegant in art, and sublime in conception.

From each of the princess's apartments, on the ground-floor through the colonnades, and in every chamber in the upper story over this range of colonnades, that divided this inner court from the large middle square of the palace, was seen all the pomp of sovereignty in its greatest magnificence. The numerous guards, posted at their different stations, displayed military parade in its highest grandeur; and the several officers of the court, habited in their various splendid dresses, and continually passing to and fro in processional cavalcade, borne sometimes in gaudy palanquins glittering with gold, and attended by a train carrying large parasols, gold and silver staves, sabres and shields, immense fans made of the enormous palm-tree, branches richly painted, and large horses' tails set in silver, which are used in India to disperse the swarms of numerous insects: at other times the courtiers and nobles were seen mounted on horses splendidly caparisoned, on camels, or on the stately elephant, surrounded by an amazing retinue of state. The tyrant himself was daily beheld passing in princely ceremony to and from

the durbar, with every circumstance of parade to awe the gathering multitude into reverence of his usurped rank.

Novel and striking as this scene was to Erina, she turned from it with agonizing disgust, because it impressed continually, in a dreadfully forcible manner on her mind, the wretched perspective of her own hopeless fate, and the wrongs of Jaffier and his mother.

Whenever the princess fixed her eyes upon the passing crowd of people, thronging to the palace to pay their court to the usurper, showers of tears fell to the remembrance of her late-loved consort; and when she beheld his wicked successor invested with all his father's state, to the exclusion of her darling and admirable son, the rightful heir to the sovereignty bequeathed him by his parent's testament and last breath, the unhappy mother mourned in all the agony of grief her only child wronged, and exiled from his principality to wander as a destitute stranger, or to risk his liberty, perhaps his life, if tempted home by the proclamation of the usurper's lenity: for the princess was too thoroughly acquainted, from long observation with Mamoud's character, and had seen too frequently repeated proofs of his treachery and cruelty, to

rely on his promises of mercy, or to believe his kindness intended for any thing but wicked purposes of deception to forward nefarious designs.

The extraordinary indulgence granted to herself and to Erina, the princess considered as a mark of the tyrant's deceit, and a preparation for some dreadful catastrophe: she did not, however, disclose her fears on this subject to the beloved object of her son's admiration, whom she adored with an affection truly maternal, equally on the score of the lovely girl's perfections, and because she was the idol of Jaffier.

To sooth his mother's grief, and indulge herself, Erina spoke of little but the illustrious youth of her animated admiration. She learned from the narrative of his whole life, and all his actions from earliest infancy to manhood, to consider him as more than human; and concealed not from the princess her opinion of the being she regarded with enthusiasm almost as a divinity, independent of the obligations his heroism had conferred on her.

One day, as the ardent girl was recapitulating to the princess an account of her intercourse with Jaffier, his mother deeply lamented that a cruel

necessity had severed for ever a pair so peculiarly formed mutually to bliss in an everlasting union.

Erina's extreme delicacy had warned her to touch but lightly on the cause of her rejection of the prince, for two reasons. In the first place, she wished to avoid the subject of his being a firm Mahometan, which she perceived occasioned his mother extreme uneasiness; and secondly, she felt averse from glancing a kind of tacit condemnation on the conduct of the princess, in having espoused a husband who was not a Christian.

The mother of Jaffier, however, had received from him a minutely circumstantial account of all that had passed between him and the object of his affection on the subject of their respective religions; and perceiving the caution with which Erina shunned the theme, she comprehended the motives of her silence on the matter of the Christian and Mahometan faith, and thus addressed the amiable girl:

"From the knowledge of every circumstance concerning you, my amiable companion and dearest friend, I am perfectly acquainted with your character as well as your history; and, from a

close investigation of your mind, I am apprehensive you must condemn me for uniting myself to a Mahometan, and permitting my son to be educated as an infidel. From this supposition, I feel anxious to disclose to you the history of my life, because I flatter myself you will find in the extraordinary incidents of it a satisfactory apology for my conduct, and, perhaps, may be induced to think it fully justified, since my situation is that of necessity rather than option.

"Your highness injures both yourself and me," said Erina, gently pressing the offered hand of the princess, "in believing, or even supposing, that I could be guilty of the illiberality, the injustice, and the cruelty of condemning a conduct unexplained, and especially the conduct of a person whom I have every reason to feel assured has ever made the most rigid virtue and religion the rule of all her actions. Nevertheless, Madam, the lively interest I take in all that concerns you, makes me desirous of knowing the history you have done me the honour of promising to communicate; and if your highness will favour me with the recital of your adventures, which your kind offer of confidence has inspired me with an anxious curiosity to learn, I shall esteem myself greatly

indulged, and highly flattered by this testimony of friendship, that it will be my pride and happiness to merit."

The princess, faintly smiling, fixed her large dark eyes on Erina, with a look of maternal affection. There was a radiance in the soft beams of her highness's glances, that spoke sensibility and genius, such as shot from the eyes of Jaffier, and which Erina loved to contemplate. Often did she sit attentively observant of her noble companion, to trace in the contour of her face and every feature, and in her majestic air, the resemblance of her amiable son. Although indisposition and sorrow had tarnished the complexion of the princess, she still possessed extreme beauty, which, depending on symmetry of face, the most exquisite proportions of figure, a striking grace of motion and air, and the fascinating expression of sentiment in every look and gesture, that rendered her irresistibly engaging. She spoke with fluency and elegance French and Persian, and still retained all the European in her tastes, notwithstanding a long residence from early youth in an Eastern court, had made her adopt in some things the modes of the country in which she lived; and she blended in her dress and deportment the noble

graces of an exalted Spaniard, with the courtly grandeur of the Asiatic habit and manners.

With such a manner, rendered superlatively engaging, as each look, gesture, and word of the princess, brought to her deeply interested auditor's remembrance the features, air, and expressions of Jaffier, his mother thus began her promised narrative:

"You see before you, my amiable and tenderly beloved young friend and companion," said the princess, bowing with an inimitable grace of sentiment and affection towards Erina, "the youngest daughter of a Spanish grandee, the Duke de las Estrellas."

"Heavens! can it be possible!" exclaimed the delighted and astonished Erina, seizing and pressing the hands of the princess with eager emotion, "that I have the happiness of beholding in your highness Donna Dorothea, the long-lost sister of a tenderly esteemed friend?"

"My name is, indeed, Dorothea," replied the princess, "and I had a sister married in England. How fortunate shall I consider myself, if you can

give me any intelligence of that near and most-beloved relation, from all intercourse with whom fate has so long debarred me. Have the kindness, my sweet young friend, to satisfy my impatient anxiety on the subject of my amiable sister, and I will afterwards continue my narrative with increased pleasure, under an idea, that your having discovered me to be the sister of a friend you highly value, will make you feel an additional interest in my story."

If any thing could have increased the mother of Jaffier Mahomed's claims to the tender attachment of the maid he had repeatedly most gallantly protected from impending danger of the worst description, it was the knowledge of beholding in the Princess of Azimabad the long-lost, much-lamented sister of Lady Herbert. To have discovered inthe mother of the illustrious youth, whom Erina idolized as the most admirable of beings, and whom she regarded with enthusiasm as her heroic preserver, the amiable aunt of her tenderly-beloved Seraphina, inspired Erina with delight little short of ecstasy. Her heart, ardent by nature, and roused by an extraordinary combination of most interesting circumstances to increased energy of feeling, expanded with glowing sentiments of en-

thusiastic sensibility, when she considered all the strong claims of the charming princess to her affection. Her admirable character, her unfortunate situation as a widowed relict of a beloved consort, in the power of a cruel usurping despot, and bereaved of an adored and injured son, and her being the unhappy mother of that illustrious youth, endeared by innumerable strong reasons to Erina's heart, had rendered the princess an object of the tenderest affection: and when, in addition to such powerful claims on her most animated regard, the grateful girl remembered that this suffering princess was the nearest relation of a family whom she had so much cause to esteem and love for their worth, as well as for the proofs of their friendship towards herself, and for their kindness and generosity towards her brother, Erina felt herself bound by indissoluble ties to the charming princess. Embracing her, therefore, with the affection her numerous claims to it inspired, the amiable and deeply-affected girl gave her a full account of all the particulars relating to Lady Herbert. In the detail of her ladyship's history, Erina's sensibility did ample justice to the eventful tale, which extremely touched the princess; to whom every occurrence of it, from the period of her waiting her arrival in Portugal, was perfectly new.

In the tenderest sympathy with the late sufferings of Lady Herbert, and in rejoicing at her present good fortune and happiness, her noble sister almost forgot her own misfortunes and sorrows. After weeping and smiling alternately during Erina's affecting recital, the princess affectionately embraced her charming companion, with a tenderness, if possible, increased on knowing her to be the chosen and faithful friend of her niece, to whose personal and mental perfections Erina's generous enthusiasm had done entire justice in representation.

"Dear and admirable girl! child of my tenderest affection!" cried the princess, "I love you supremely for your uncommon virtues; I am attached to you as a fond mother for the sake of my darling son, who idolizes you as you merit. If any thing could increase my affection, it would gather strength from the numerous other ties which bind me to you: amongst those ties, your kind and filial attentions to me form the most powerful claims to my gratitude, as well as to my love; in addition to which, your having cheered my sorrowful heart with an account of my sister's happiness, gives you another demand upon my gratitude. It grieves me, alas! my lovely girl!" added the princess, pressing

the hand of Erina, "that I am reduced to the state of an insolvent debtor. I have never, amidst all my late distresses, more lamented my situation than at this moment, when I feel my inability to repay an obligation. Riches and power are only valuable as the means of diffusing happiness."

Erina, at the sight of the princess's tears, could only reply by weeping in sympathy for some moments. At length, making an effort to shake off unavailing sadness, and console her noble friend, she rallied spirits sufficient thus to address her:

"Your highness must not talk of being an insolvent debtor, when your society and affection overpays all I could ever perform, in token of a small acknowledgment for the favours your illustrious son conferred on me.

"I would console you with the assurance that the wealth and power you knew so well to employ in blessing a whole country, will be restored to those who have been most frithful stewards in distributing benefits and felicity."

The princess sighed, and shook her head; whilst Erina, desirous of turning her thoughts from the

subject of her present sorrow, called on the princess to recite the promised story of her adventures, who thus began:

"It would be a needless repetition to inform you, my sweet girl, with the reason for quitting my father's house, to accept my amiable sister's invitation to leave my home, and give up my country for ever, to reside with my generous brother-in-law in England. It will be sufficient to tell you, my dearest Erina, that, by the assistance of my kind aunt, I was enabled to set out on my clandestine journey, with every precaution that could be devised by the care of that amiable woman, to ensure my convenience and safety.

"Under the disguise of a peasant, and attended by a faithful old woman, who had been my nurse, and who, in the same rustic garb I wore, was to personate my mother, we were put under the care of a muleteer, whom Donna Isabella had long known to be an honest carrier, and whom she had frequently employed in her service.

"Although she felt assured of his fidelity in carefully preserving whatever was entrusted to his charge, she knew him to be too garrulous and

frank, to retain as a secret the rank of the traveller committed to his care, and therefore merely informed my guide, that I was a young girl journeying to join some relations in Portugal: at the place my sister was waiting my arrival, I was to leave the carrier, and repair with my nurse to the retreat of Violante, and concert with her the means of my old attendant's return to Spain, or embarkation for England with us, as would be judged best on consultation.

"We proceeded as far as the frontiers of Portugal without any accident, when, at an inn within a short distance of my sister's retreat, we were marked by a set of villains, who had baited at the same place, as persons of more note than we appeared to be by our dress. In consequence of our being supposed rich persons of high rank in disguise, we were traced on our journey by this gang of desperadoes, till we came to a solitary place, where we were attacked by the ruffians.

"The poor muleteer endeavoured to defend himself and me, with my nurse, until, disabled by wounds received in the fierce conflict, he was compelled to desist from further combat, being thrown on the ground, weltering in his blood.

"The ruffians, believing him killed, at my intercession forbore to mangle the body, as they had ferociously proposed, and began to rifle me and the nurse, threatening to murder us if we concealed any of our property. Apprehensive of being personally insulted, we delivered up all the cash and valuable things about us, to a considerable amount, when the villains who had plundered us left us benighted in our desolated situation.

"In a state of wretchedness and horror not to be described, and almost bereaved of my senses as of hope of any relief, I seated myself in utter darkness on a drear and barren heath, far removed from every human habitation. In this condition I waited till morning, starting every instant at ideal terrors, and sighing responsive to the groans and lamentations of my nurse, until overwhelmed with suffering and grief at our situation, she fainted in my arms, from the debility of old age.

"With her aged head resting on my knees, the dawn broke on me, whilst I bathed her venerable face with tears, and poured forth bitter complaints that I was sensible could avail nothing. The rising sun exhibited to my view the wounded car-

rier, to all appearance dead, at some distance from me, and his mules straying about the heath.

"To describe the horrors of my situation would be impossible: wet with dew, shivering at the breath of a keen wind, and the terrors of my mind, and weak from fright, fatigue, and want of sustenance, with desolation, blood, and famine around me, and a miserable death before me, I commended myself to the mercy of Heaven: believing my nurse had expired, I also prayed for the repose of her soul; and felt some consolation in these acts of devotion, when I perceived a number of persons coming towards me; and on their approach, seeing them to be peasants, I beckoned them to me.

"Obedient to my invitation, they gathered round me with looks of commiseration, and offers of assistance, which I accepted with gratitude.

"The people having learned from me the nature of our misfortune, got the three mules belonging to the carrier: and having raised him, and pronounced him dead, they threw him over one of his beasts; and placing me on another of them, and supporting my fainting nurse on the third, we

were conveyed to the nearest village, whither the peasants were repairing to market. At that place I was humanely received into a cottage with my nurse, who, in spite of medical aid, immediately procured for her, and my care, only recovered from her deep swoon to breath her last sigh in the agony of renovated sensibility.

"The shock of seeing her expire in extreme pain, threw me into convulsions; and, from excessive grief and exhaustion, I was seized with a violent fever, that was attended with delirium.

"Although I lay in a state of extreme danger and insensibility for three weeks, it pleased Heaven to spare my life.

"On the recovery of my senses, I found myself a miserable being, reduced to entire dependance on the care of needy and total strangers, who were ignorant of my name, and all concerning me. Afraid of discovering myself, from an apprehension of falling into the hands of a cruel and incensed father, I knew not what measure to adopt to extricate myself from a situation of equal suffering and difficulty. Debilitated in frame, and weak in mind, I saw myself in the utmost di-

lemma. Without money, and far from any being in whom I could confide, or from whom I could ask advice, as I was as much afraid of betraying my sister and my aunt, as of exposing myself to my violent father's vengeance, I was at a loss what to do or what to say relative to my situation.

"To write, or send a messenger either to my sister or my aunt, might lead to their ruin, as well as to my own; for I was convinced that both my enraged father, and the vindictive Don Sebastian, would pursue with equal rancour my sister, myself, and Donna Isabella, if circumstances should transpire that could at all lead to the discovery of our retreat, or cause the least suspicion of our aunt being concerned in our elopement.

"The cottage where I had been received and attended by charity, was occupied by two old women, for whom I conceived gratitude and affection proportioned to their humanity and kindness to me. Without the means of remunerating them for the trouble and expence the interment of my nurse, and my long illness had occasioned them, I felt shocked at the idea of being any longer a charge upon their bounty, and was anxious to seek my sister, from the double motive of relieving my

kind hostesses from their care of me, and tranquillizing the minds of my aunt and sister respecting me, as they must each, I imagined, be in the utmost perplexity about me. I entertained also a hope of being enabled, through the bounty of my friends, to reward generously the disinterested kindness of my two worthy attendants, in receiving and nursing, in a dangerous and tedious illness, a destitute stranger; as they could not, from my appearance, imagine I should ever possess the power of remunerating them as their benevolence merited.

"Impatient, for all these reasons, to rejoin my sister, who, I flattered myself, might have waited at the appointed place for our meeting, in hopes of gaining some intelligence of me; and yet, fearful that a desire to learn the cause of my extraordinary delay on the road, might have induced my sister to leave her retreat in search of me, I insisted on being permitted to go to the place, before I was sufficiently reestablished in health or strength for the undertaking I meditated.

"Accordingly, having urged myself far beyond my powers, to appear well enough to set out on my journey, my kind hostesses completed their work of charity, in hiring me a seat in a public vehicle to the place I indicated as the abode of a

friend to whom I was going, when the misfortune of my detention happened. Without acquainting them with my rank, I expressed my grateful sense of the favours they had conferred on me, and mentioned the hope I entertained, that Providence would enable me to requite my infinite obligations to them. The good creatures assured me, they wished not any worldly recompense for their care of me; and we parted with innumerable tears of gratitude and affection on my part, and regret at my departure on theirs, notwithstanding the trouble I had occasioned them.

"To dilate on the feelings with which I commenced this journey would render my narrative too prolix. With such sentiments as my situation might be supposed to inspire, I entered the kingdom of Portugal, and soon arrived at the town where I was to be directed to my sister's retreat in its vicinity. The name of the place, and the feigned appellation by which I was to inquire for my sister, was all I could speak to be understood at the town where I stopped, and where I comprehended as little what I heard; for notwithstanding the affinity between the Spanish and Portuguese languages, it is not easy at first, in the rapidity of colloquial intercourse, to seize the exact meaning of a sentence. As the persons of whom

I enquired my way to my sister's residence were totally unacquainted with French, I was compelled to seek out my road by innumerable questions, frequently repeated and ill understood; and with infinite difficulty, after doubling the distance to her dwelling, and frequently mistaking it, to my disappointment and perplexity, I reached a quinta, or villa, which I found she had inhabited and left!

"Words are inadequate to express my feelings on this occasion. A young female in a foreign kingdom, ignorant of the language of those amongst whom she is cast a perfect stranger, destitute, weak, agonized by the cruellest disappointment, and who is equally bereaved of the knowledge as of the power to extricate herself from the most dreadful difficulty, was a situation as miserable as it was extraordinary.

"Debilitated to an extreme, from fatigue as well as illness, I felt myself near fainting without knowing whither to direct my course; and in a paroxysm of despair, I burst into a passion of hysterical tears at the door of the house, deserted by my sister, on learning, upon enquiry of the woman who inhabited it, and who fortunately for me was a Spaniard, that the young lady and gen-

tleman, with their companion, had sat off for England some time before.

"My good countrywoman was much moved at seeing my distress, and invited me into the habitation; where I endeavoured to compose my strongly agitated spirits, and summon to my support the resignation and fortitude requisite in my miserable situation.

"Reflection appeared incapable of aiding me to form any plan for my conduct in the emergency of my affairs. To follow my sister was utterly impracticable, as I wanted the money requisite for the journey; and as my countrywoman could not inform me the route her late lodgers had taken, and I was perfectly ignorant of my brother-in-law's address in England, I should not have thought of endeavouring to trace them, even had I not failed in the pecuniary means of setting out for that country.

"The woman told me a great deal about the lady, whom she had loved and pitied, because she was, as she told me, beautiful, good, and unhappy. I found, however, she had not disclosed her name, and I was therefore bound not to discover mine, as the worthy woman found, from

my resemblance to Donna Violante, that I was the sister whom she expected, and whom she had heard, by letters from Madrid, had suddenly died. I was deeply affected at the good woman's pathetic recital of my sister's distress on my account, and conjectured the report of my death must have been sent to her by our aunt, who, I imagined, believed I could not have escaped the fate of the murdered carrier, of whose fatal accident she might have been apprized, from her anxiety to learn intelligence of me, on my extraordinary delay on the road to my sister.

" Upon my countrywoman's discovery that I was a person of rank, she evinced as much respect as compassion for me; and pressed me to make her house my home, until I could inform my friends in Spain of my situation.

" Few, alas! were those whom I could consider such: my amiable aunt was the only relative or acquaintance I had on whom I could confer the title of friend. My total seclusion in the convent, where I had been placed from childhood, had deprived me of the least intercourse with any one out of the convent, except my aunt, who came frequently to see me. Of my father I knew nothing, but his austerity and his cruel intention or

sacrificing me for his aggrandizement to Don Sebastian, whom I abhorred: and as the apprehension of being delivered into his power deterred me from every idea of seeking refuge in the religious abode I had left, or in any other convent, where I must have been discovered, and should have been given up to my father's severest vengeance, I could apply to no one but Donna Isabella.

"This I now determined to do, although her ability to protect me was extremely uncertain, and I might risk her safety with my own. However, it was my only resource, and I adopted, after much consideration, the most guarded manner of addressing her, and such as I conceived could not expose her as an accomplice in my flight, nor even discover her having been privy to it, were the letter to fall into my father's hands.

"Having dispatched an account of myself to Donna Isabella's address at Madrid, without letting my countrywoman see the superscription of my packet, I began to consider how I should dispose of myself, until I received an answer to my letter.

"The worthy woman, seeing my distress on

this subject, again kindly offered me her house for a residence, and promised to provide a little table for me, and wait on me, although I confessed my purse too low to procure me the commonest necessaries of life, unless it were replenished by the generosity of a friend, to whom I had just written to solicit assistance.

" The good woman's bounty affected me; but I had too much spirit to take advantage of her hospitality, in the extent she pressed it on my acceptance. Although unaccustomed to pecuniary considerations, and ignorant how to economize narrowly, I perceived the propriety of carefully guarding against incurring expences, when I had not money to disburse; and therefore requested my hostess to admit me only as an humble lodger, and to give me share of her own fare, however plain it might be, with permission to be her companion, instead of occupying the good apartments she might let to advantage.

" This entreaty, although contrary to my hostess's solicitations, that I would consider myself her inmate according to my rank, without the least uneasiness relative to the payment of her house, she at length consented to; and it was on two accounts most fortunate for us both, that she

agreed to my requests; because, as it happened, I could not have discharged the expense of her lodgings, and by her letting them, I found a true friend at the moment I was most in need of one.

"After waiting in vain an answer from my aunt for upwards of three weeks, I again addressed her; conceiving either my letter, or one she might have written me in reply, had miscarried: but being disappointed in the second weakened expectation of hearing from her, I mourned this amiable relation as for ever lost to me by death, or some other cruel misfortune.

"Distressed beyond measure at the miserable prospect before me, of living a dependant and a burden on the charity of an entire stranger, or throwing myself a poor mendicant on the bounty of the public at large, or, what would even have appeared to me more wretched, to have unavailingly supplicated a father's mercy, and exposed myself to the shock of being spurned from his door as a disowned child, to perish under parental malediction, or to have been barbarously immolated as a victim at the shrine of avarice and cruelty. Thus situated, I shuddered at the perspective of my life, of which devotion was the sole consolation.

" Depressed to the verge of despondence, I yet felt that exertion was necessary, and had firmness of mind to resolve on using every possible effort to maintain myself by some honourable occupation, instead of living an idle load on my only friend's generosity.

" Although I was extremely young, and was not at all acquainted with the world, my education had not been neglected; in addition to a perfect knowledge of French, I was tolerably conversant with books, understood geography and figures, could write a good hand, and knew all kinds of needlework. These qualifications, I imagined, would fit me to superintend the tuition of children; and I bent my thoughts to seek the place of instructress to little girls in a Portuguese family; resolving not to revisit my country, since I should there be equally destitute, if possible, more unhappy, and certainly less safe, than in a foreign kingdom.

" My worthy hostess, who was acquainted with my situation in most respects, although I had not confided all my history, nor my name to her knowledge, pitied, and was anxious to serve me. At my earnest desire, she sought for me a situation such as I wished to procure; but as no place

immediately offered, as I was weary of an indolent life, and moreover was anxious for any employment that would enable me to defray the small expences I had incurred, notwithstanding my hostess insisted upon my not considering myself indebted to her at all, I begged her to procure me needlework to execute; which she accordingly got for me from the neighbouring town. At this employment I worked with unremitted assiduity; and although I was not paid high for my labour, I made a profit beyond my current expenditure, which in some time discharged my debt to my friend.

"In the meanwhile her lodgings were hired by an elderly lady of our own country, whose daughter had married a Portuguese gentleman, and who was then on her way from Spain to visit this daughter at Lisbon, previous to her embarkation for India.

"The Spanish lady, who was infirm in health, had stopped at the little country house kept by my countrywoman, on account of indisposition. There was an air of goodness about her which attracted my regard, and as she was an invalid, and had not many attendants round her, I endeavoured, by my assiduity, to render her tem-

porary residence at the quinta as little inconvenient as possible, during her illness in absence from home. There was a tenderness in my attentions which pleased the lady; and perhaps my being of her own nation attached her to me, as we were each foreigners in the kingdom. Observing me dejected, and learning I was unfortunate, she evinced so much kind interest towards me, as to induce me to an entire confidence in the friendship she professed. Upon hearing my history and name, which she requested to know under the promise of eternal secrecy, she assured me of her constant protection: and inviting me to accompany her to Lisbon, gracefully waved the appearance of conferring an obligation, by telling me, with infinite politeness, that in accepting her invitation I should be doing her a favour, instead of receiving one from her, as my presence had become necessary to her.

" Such an offer was too flattering to be rejected; and telling my new and kind friend, that the grace with which she conferred the greatest possible favour on me, infinitely heightened the obligation, I sat off with my amiable patroness for the capital of Portugal, where I hoped to find the means of independence.

" On my arrival in that city, I acquired a second friend, as admirable and affectionate as my patroness. This friend was her daughter, who conceived for me an enthusiastic regard, which I returned with similar sentiments.

" The attentions I received from this amiable creature Donna Jacintha, from her husband Signor Perdero, and their mother, were extremely flattering and consoling. I was requested to consider myself at home as a near relation in their house: yet, charming as I found a residence with this estimable family, I resolved not to permit myself to be seduced by their generous kindness to live an entire dependant on it; and notwithstanding their repeated dissuasion against my seeking a means of maintaining myself, I eagerly enquired for a situation, such as I had determined to undertake.

" Whilst engaged in this pursuit, Donna Jacintha one day thus addressed me, with a manner of peculiarly winning softness."

' I have long, my dear Dorothea, wished to make a proposal to you; but motives of delicacy have made me silent on the subject nearest my heart, until now, when your perseverance in the

intention of seeking a situation, induces me to make the offer of one, which, at the same time, I feel much indeed beneath your rank.

'I wish for a female companion in my voyage to India. Dare I ask your friendship to fill a station so far below your pretensions?'

"Most readily," replied I, "shall I accept a situation most agreeable to me."

"The amiable Jacintha thanked me for this condescension, as she termed my compliance with her wishes; and thus proceeded. 'I would not have made the proposal of taking you to an unhealthy climate, had I not believed that, as circumstances prevent your return to Spain with my mother, you would find yourself happier even under some disadvantages with a true friend than with strangers. I must, however, make one condition with you, my dear Dorothea, which is, that you guardedly conceal from every one the terms of our agreement. For *my* satisfaction, you must accept a salary, although I consider you as a sister. Your claims, as my mother's favourite and adopted daughter, attach me to you for ever under that title; and under that of my *friend* alone must you appear.'

" The delicate friendship, the noble generosity of Jacintha, affected me even to tears; she wept in sympathy with me, and a mutual embrace ratified our agreement.

" The subsequent conduct of Jacintha towards me, fulfilled all my expectations which sanguine youth had formed of enthusiastic friendship: and embarking for Goa with her, I had but one regret on leaving Portugal, which was that of quitting her mother, who had indeed been one to me.

" Our passage was prosperous: and, consoled for my past griefs by the attentions of my kind friend and her husband, my mind became tranquillized, and my spirits light.

" I trusted my sister had found happiness: and although I regretted our eternal separation, I ceased to lament it bitterly, from a persuasion that I might have been a heavy burshen on my brother-in-law; and became perfectly contented in my situation, from a conviction that Providence orders all things for the best.

" Previous to my quitting Portugal, I had realized a little sum of money by occupying myself assiduously in embroidery, which I disposed of at

a good price, from a wish to appropriate the profits of my work as a present to the worthy old peasants, who had so humanely received, and so kindly nursed me in my illness on the confines of Spain. The tribute of gratitude for their benevolence, I committed to the care of Donna Jacintha's mother, to deliver to them on their return home; and, touched by their bounty to me, she promised to befriend them for my sake, which afforded me extreme delight.

"The composure of mind, that had permitted me to find pleasure in the beginning of my voyage, in the latter end of it was disturbed by a circumstance of the most distressing nature. The husband of Jacintha, to whom she was passionately attached, and from whom she had experienced the most ardent affection, gradually cooled in his attentions to her, and almost openly directed them to me. Shocked at the testimonies of his guilty passion, and his neglect of my charming friend, who behaved on this trying occasion with angelic sweetness, I endeavoured in every way to discountenance and crush the unfortunate sentiments of her husband, equally fatal to my peace as to his honour; and solemnly vowed to seize the first opportunity at the end of our voyage to leave Jacintha, and never see her husband more.

" Such an opportunity presented itself immediately on our arrival at Goa. Abdallah, the reigning Prince of Azimabad visited that city, saw, and loved me. In person and mind he resembled Jaffier, and won my admiration. He wooed me with delicacy, and gained my heart by a sacred vow of eternal devotion and strict fidelity to me, offering to unite himself to me by the ceremony of my religion, if I would bestow my hand on him.

" The vow I had sworn, to leave Jacintha, and separate myself for ever from her husband, urged me to follow the dictates of my heart; and I became the wife of Abdallah, equally from conscientious motives, and the impulse of tender attachment to him. He evinced himself worthy of my enthusiastic affection, and fulfilled his promises religiously. I will not recapitulate the felicity I enjoyed in an union, which gave me every blessing this world can bestow. But happiness, without alloy, is not the lot of mortals in this sublunary state. Blessed as a wife and mother in a husband and a son, such as, perhaps, no woman but myself could boast, I should be thankful that I had no grief but one—that grief was the religion of Abdallah, and the necessity to which I was reduced of permitting my darling Jaffier, to be educated as an infidel. I will not mention as sorrows the

death of two infant daughters; for it is the duty of a christian to submit, without murmuring, to the decrees of Heaven, as ultimately good.

" Signor Perdero, whom I never saw after my marriage, died soon after his arrival at Goa of a fever, brought on by the climate; and my sweet friend Jacintha, after spending some time with me at this place, during which she gathered consolation in witnessing my felicity, returned to Spain, and in the bosom of her mother and her country found placid happiness, of which she regularly informs me by the epistolary intercourse of friendship, that can end only with our lives.

" Of my aunt and sister, I could gain no intelligence, notwithstanding repeated enquiries respecting both, made by my friend Jacintha on her return to Spain.

" Without one regret, except my separation from those loved friends and dear relations, I have lived here in a magnificence and felicity, fully appreciated by a comparison of it with preceding privations, and the miseries of my early years. Under my present severe calamities, I trust, I am as submissive and resigned to the dispensations of Providence, as a christian ought to be, whose duty

is to be contented with the decrees of Heaven, to place a firm reliance on Supreme Wisdom, as the infallible judge of what is best for us, to be grateful for past blessings, by kissing the hand that chastises us; remembering in our highest enjoyments, that happiness unalloyed is not the lot of mortals; and recollecting, amidst the severest calamities, that in proportion to our patient endurance of trials, there is a sure reward for the faithful beyond human conception,

CHAP. IX.

"Felicity and prosperity are harder trials for the human mind than misery and adversity. In unhappiness and misfortune, the heart, in need of consolation, has recourse to religion as the best solace; and finds in piety, the fortitude to suffer with patience and resignation: but, in the midst of enjoyment and success, the world, by innumerable allurements, seduces us from serious reflection, and the intoxicating cup of pleasure, too frequently, degrades our nature; and, makes us less vigilant in duties, when we should be most so: for, with the accession of riches and power, our obligations multiply, and our temptations to neglect them, encrease in a duplicate proportion."

ERINA was as much affected at the recital of the princess's adventures, as she had been at the narrative of the lovely girl's misfortunes, which had put her in the power of the cruel and usurping tyrant.

Each living in dread of his exerting that power

to their destruction, prepared their mind for the the worst calamities that could happen: but the despot was at this moment too much absorbed by his designs of ambition, and the caution and terror which must always attend usurped authority and nefarious projects, to trouble himself about concerns of which he felt more secure, and in consequence of knowing that by a fiat he could do whatever he pleased with the princess and Erina, he delayed seeing them, until the projected measures of compleatly subduing them to every purpose he might devise, were ripe for execution.

The intended victims of his future cruelty, in the meanwhile, lived unmolested by the tyrant's presence. Surrounded by all the splendour of sovereignty, all the charms of magnificent art, all the delights of beautiful nature, and attended with all the pomp of royalty amidst the concentered luxuries of the East, Erina and the princess enjoyed nothing but each other's society, and found no pleasure but in the regular observance of their religious devotions. Daily tranquillized by pious exercises, each endeavoured to console the other in their common misfortunes: and to converse on the subject of every absent friend, seemed to assemble round Erina and her illustrious companion in sorrow, an ideal society of those beloved by

both. By frequent description the late associates of the princess and her companion became equally familiar to each; and at moments, almost forgetful of their own griefs, they gave tender recollections to those which might fall to the lot of Lord Herbert's family, to that of Glenrock, to the inhabitants of de Briançon's villa, to the amiable Wilmot, and the exiled and wandering Jaffier.

After much agonizing apprehension on his account, Ismael, the favourite attendant of the princess, brought her intelligence that he had heard from Ibrahim, the minister of the late sovereign, now banished by the tyrant, that the exiled prince had taken refuge at Calcutta; where Erina hoped that he might find support amongst the English, whose justice and humanity always prompt them to avenge their infringement.

Debarred from all communication with any one out of the palace, Albion was permitted to wait on Erina, at his earnest entreaty, and was faithful in his services, although they could not be as useful as his affection desired, as a strict watch was kept on all his actions by the express command of the tyrant, fearful lest Erina should contrive secret intelligence with her friends by the means of that attached domestic.

Zeleida, who had regained her health on her emancipation from the confinement of the prison, and whose gentle nature sympathized with all the afflictions of Erina, assisted her in her assiduous attentions to the princess; who, notwithstanding her liberation from the cell of a dreary dungeon, to the splendid re-establishment in her own palace, still lingered in a slow consuming fever, in spite of medical aid, and the filial cares of Erina towards the restoration of her health. The misery of Jaffier's mother, both on his account, and that of the maid he idolized, brought on an imperceptible decay, which made its gradual and fatal approaches in an encreasing languor, that agonized the watchful Erina's anxious fears.

Ismael, scarcely less interested about his beloved mistress, procured all the medical aid that Azimabad afforded, and offered high emoluments to all the physicians of the neighbouring district, if any of them succeeded in prescribing for the princess remedies, that would revive her from the languishing state in which she lingered. In consequence of this invitation, every Mahometan and Hindoo professor of the Æsculapian art, from the countries round Azimabad, flocked to that city, to offer their services at the palace. The princess submitted to their prescriptions in succession, without the

least faith in them, or any benefit from the different orders she mildly complied in observing, from a principle of religious duty, which enjoins the preservation of life as long as it pleases Heaven to spare it, and from a wish also of complying with the earnest entreaties of Ismael, and tranquillizing the fears of Erina; who wondered at the saint-like patience with which the princess endured the sufferings of her mind, and the addition to them of bodily pain.

One evening, as they were breathing the fresh air of the garden shades in the pavilion apartment, Ismael entered to announce the vist of a new physician. The princess, with her accustomed condescension, permitted her faithful attendant to introduce the person, for whose reception he solicited with peculiar eagerness. Reclining on a cushion, she bowed to her new visitor with a gracious smile; and whilst he prostrated himself before the illustrious patient, Erina withdrew into the colonnade towards the garden, and Ismael retiring with the women in waiting, left the princess without any witnesses to the requested interview, except Zeleida and Erina, who viewed it at a distance from their station in the colonnade.

The amiable girl, whose whole attention was

directed to the scene in the apartment, observed the stranger approach the princess with his arms folded, and looking on the ground as if in deep thought, and standing an instant in close attention of the princess, who extended her hand towards him, Erina beheld the visitor throw open the drapery that had concealed him entirely from view, and dropping on one knee, suddenly appear in the character of the august Jaffier, and the duteous son!

Impelled by irresistible sentiments, Erina sprang forward with an exclamation of astonishment and joy; and, kneeling to assist the prince in supporting his fainting parent, added another beauteous figure to the interesting groupe, while looks and gestures in silence, expressed these tumultuous feelings of surprise and ecstacy on both sides, which choaked all utterance of words; yet, in the eloquence of tears and sighs, spoke volumes to each other's heart, in the language of sentiment, on this unexpected interview between the astonished and delighted pair.

As Erina through her tears beheld those of the prince bedew the pallid face of his swooning mother, and saw the duteous youth press his lips with filial reverence on his parent's cheek, the

amiable girl contemplated with adoration the figure and countenance of Jaffier, where all that could exalt human nature was delineated and painted in the most striking touches and colouring.

The recovery of the princess to animation was as sudden nearly as the privation of her senses had been; for the surprise that had rendered them torpid, served quickly to revive her spirits. The first interchange of exclamatory sentences was too rapid and incoherent to be recorded, even in the memory of those between whom they passed.—When the tumult of a first salutation, and reiterated mutual enquiries relative to a thousand particulars respecting each party would permit a more tranquillized intercourse, the prince thus addressed the objects of his solicitude, in reply to their interrogations:

"When, on leaving Chandinagore for my return home, I arrived in the territory of Azimabad, I learned the sudden death of my father, and the usurpation of Mamoud, the shock almost deprived me of my senses; and I heard myself proscribed as an outlaw with an almost torpid indifference. The idea, however, which occurred to me of my mother's danger, roused me from the

state of stupefaction into which I had been thrown by the account of my father's decease. My first impulse was to rush to the rescue of my now only parent, when one of my suite represented to me the rashness of the undertaking, and convinced me that such a line of conduct would inevitably ruin myself without succouring my mother; and I therefore resolved to save myself from my brother's fury, to endeavour to shield her from it by better concerted measures.

"In order, therefore, to secure myself for the future preservation of the being to whom I owed my birth, I permitted my course to be directed to the neighbouring state of my kinsman, the Nabob of Muradpore.

"Notwithstanding my forlorn and exiled state, he received me kindly, and entertained me hospitably, advising me to assert my right by force of arms, and promised me military aid to redress my injuries. This conduct drew on the nabob the ire of Mamoud, and a threat to invade the territory of Muradpore, without giving quarter, unless I were delivered up to his power.

"The horror I experienced in occasioning fire, sword, and famine, to ravage the innocent subjects

of my kinsman, and an abhorrence of plunging my own country in a civil war, the greatest of human miseries, added to the idea that, in asserting my claims to the sovereignty of Azimabad, I should whet my brother's vengeance to perpetrate new crimes, and wreak his savage fury on my helpless mother, checked all inclination to erect my standard in defence of my rights, which, when weighed against humanity, seemed to me trivial indeed.—The advantage of the state my father's glory had raised to proud pre-eminence, the happiness of my countrymen, the safety of my mother, were my only objects; and I resolved to sacrifice my individual interests to that mother, and the public good, which I believed could best be effected by my retiring from princely state. Destitute as I was of the means of maintaining sovereign pomp, I dismissed my retinue, notwithstanding my train unanimously solicited to remain in my service without any emoluments of office. Their faithful attachment to me, made me, however, insist on their not sacrificing their properties for my sake; and, requesting them to return to their families and homes at Azimabad, I absolved them from all offence against me, in submitting themselves to the usurper, requiring only one proof of their allegiance to me, which was, to watch assiduously over the life and happiness of my mother; and, on

their sacred vow of performing the only duty I required of them, I purposed to retire as a privat character to Calcutta, that I might not involve my kinsman in a ruinous war, by espousing my claims in opposition to my brother.

"In my way to the retreat I had fixed on as the most agreeable I could choose, because of my partiality for the British nation, I could not resist the impulse of calling at Chandinagore, to seek in the loved society of Lady Kinross, and her lovely charge, the consolation of which I felt myself so much in need, and which, I was assured, friendship could alone afford my agitated soul. Severe, indeed, was the shock fate aimed at my heart, in lascerating it additionally at the moment my hopes were awakened to the expectation of enjoying the only pleasure I had believed in store for me.

"I found Lady Kinross mourning Erina, lost to her for ever in the most shocking manner; for she had just received intelligence, on diligent enquiry at her second extraordinary disappearance, that she had been traced from the village, whence she had dispatched a messenger with notice of her return, strolling at the dusk of evening with Zeleida and her youthful attendant, a black slave-boy, in a wood; and it was imagined at the village that

the lady and her companions must have fallen a prey to wild beasts, as none of the party had since been seen, although incessant search for a long time had been made for many leagues round the country by all the inhabitants.

" This news was like a stroke of lightning to me ; and, equally in need of consolation as Lady Kinross, I remained at Chandinagore as the guest of de Briançon, at his request. To express my obligations to their friendship would be impossible, because their attentions to me exceed infinitely all description.

" We experienced mutual comfort in continually conversing on the perfections of Erina. It was in the contemplation of your character, my lovely friend," cried Jaffier, bowing to the tearful, smiling, blushing maid, " that I saw the charms of Christianity fully and beautifully displayed. I perused and re-perused your last touching letter, on the subject of your hopes that, when we were separated for ever, I might be converted to your true faith without any interested motive. That time, as if prophesied by you, seemed arrived and it appeared to me that, in the remembrance of your spiritual advice, the voice of Heaven commanded me to become a Christian, whilst reason

convinced me of the errors of Mahometanism.—I studied each faith comparatively with the other; and, in proportion as my understanding became enlightened with the pure doctrines of the gospel; I perceived the divinity of Christ, believed in him as the Messiah, and saw that fallen man could only be saved by faith in the Redeemer's atonement; all sufficient to appease the justice of the offended Deity, whose mercy we obtain through the sacrifice of his son, if we believe in him, and endeavour to follow his precepts, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

"This system is so sublime as to inspire human reason with a conviction that infinite Wisdom and Goodness could alone be its author. Impressed with this persuasion, I abjured the errors of Mahometanism, and became a Christian under the seal of baptism, retaining the names my father had bestowed upon me, as a tribute of affectionate respect to his memory, which I must ever revere."

To express the joy of the princess and Erina at the declaration of Jaffier's conversation, would be impossible. He received the demonstrations of their delight with enthusiasm most gracefully evinced, and thus continued the narration of the events which brought him to Azimabad:

" The faithful servants whom I had dismissed to seek their own preservation, by submission to the usurper, who had issued a manifesto, proclaiming indulgence to all who, within a certain time, returned to their country, and shewed allegiance to him; and threatening proscription to all rebels against his authority, and the destruction of the families of those who remained disobedient to the proclamation, in the meanwhile returned to Azimabad to save their lives and property, in order to devote both to my service. Thus associating themselves by a solemn oath of confederation as my firm adherents, whilst they lulled the tyrant into an extraordinary confidence in them, under an appearance of their having deserted me, they watched, according to my desires, over my first interest, in the preservation of my mother, whom, at parting from them, I had committed to their care.

" Having obtained posts about the palace, they were apprized of all that passed within it; and learning my beloved parent's imprisonment, they dispatched intelligence of it to me, with a request that I would not think of appearing in the territory of Azimabad, nor in any of the adjoining states, as high rewards were offered for my life, and neither my own countrymen nor any of the

neighbouring princes ought to be trusted, as the bribes for my delivery into the usurper's power might tempt many to betray me.

"The intelligence of my mother's imprisonment was infinitely a greater grief to me than any thing that threatened myself. I instantly dispatched a written proposal to Mamoud, of delivering myself up to him, if he would free my mother from prison, and send her to Chandinagore: and, in hopes he might be induced to accede to this request, I solicited protection for my parent of the government of that place, where Lady Kinross assured me she would receive my mother as her own.

"The cruel tyrant would not, however, agree to my proposal; but immediately issued a public declaration that, if I did not surrender myself into his hands, my parent should become the victim of his vengeance. The moment I was apprized of this proclamation, I set out for this territory, to save my beloved parent, by the voluntary sacrifice of myself. My friends, de Briançon, and Lady Kinross, saw me depart with sorrow proportioned to their regard for me.

"After travelling with all diligence, I arrived at

the house of one of my friends in this city without being recognized, as I had taken precautions to disguise myself, in order to obtain, if possible, intercourse with my mother, and a secret interview with her, as I was aware the tyrant's cruelty would debar me that pleasure were I in his power, notwithstanding his late indulgence to her, and the proclamation of lenity towards me, which I was sensible were only snares to lure me to destruction. The friend who received me promised me every assistance he could afford me, and concealed me some days in his house to further my plan.

" In the meanwhile, Ibrahim, the first minister of my late father, although under sentence of banishment, contrived, by his influence amongst the people, to elude the search of the usurper's minions, and remain at Azimabad in concealment, to watch an opportunity for my re-establishment; and, by a secret communication with my adherents, learning my arrival, he contrived a clandestine interview with me, in which he endeavoured to persuade me to withdraw to the court of my kinsman at Muradpore whilst he erected my standard.—This project I positively refused, for the various reasons I have already stated; when, finding me firm in the rejection of the measure he had proposed, he, with my other friends, concerted a plan

for my admission into the palace, in the disguise of a physician, amongst the numbers that daily resorted to the princess, assuring me that, by my apprizing you of a scheme they had concerted for rescuing you out of the tyrant's power, you might effect your escape from the palace gardens by my assistance this night at twelve.

"This, my beloved mother, is the errand of your son. I know your courage and attachment to me too well to doubt your readiness to run some risk to escape greater peril; and I am induced to urge you to the undertaking of difficulty, to shun more serious danger. The hope of delivering you and this angelic girl from the usurper's power," cried the prince, bowing with respectful enthusiasm on the trembling hand of the agitated Erina, "will call forth all my mental and corporeal faculties. Fear not, therefore, to rely on me for care and protection through some evils. I will wait your coming, my mother, with your lovely companion, at the eastern wall of these gardens, near the Chinese temple, at midnight: repair thither at the appointed hour, and leave the rest to me, recommending yourselves with me, as I shall do, to the care of Heaven.

"I trust its mercy has yet in store the greatest

blessing of my life, that happiness consists not in the recovery of princely splendour and sovereign state, which I resign with pleasure for the superior felicity of rescuing virtue from oppression, and restoring my mother, and virgin innocence, to freedom, security, and the happiness resulting from them.

" Let me, my parent, and my amiable friend, Erina," exclaimed the prince with energy, seizing a hand of each, and pressing it to his bosom, whilst he dropped gracefully on one knee at the feet of the princess and her companion," " let me," he repeated with ardour, " anticipate the joy of restoring you to liberty. Let me cheer you both with the idea of speedily embracing my friend, Lady Kinross. How rejoiced she will be to press Erina to her bosom, on beholding her unexpectedly, I can conceive from the transport I have experienced in finding the beloved object we believed lost to us for ever.

" When I shall have effected this, I will then endeavour, in the entire devotion of myself to filial attentions, to console my mother for the loss of my father, and her former state of splendour."

The princess, smiling a mother's fondness on

her son, assured him her happiness was centered in him, and that in his society she could regret nothing: whilst Erina, embracing her, and holding out one hand towards the prince, expressed a hope that friendship might thenceforth unite them as inseparable companions. "I trust," said the lovely girl, smiling, "I may yet have the pleasure of introducing to the gratitude of my family my preserver and his admirable mother, to pay incessant and kindest attentions to whom such numerous obligations bind us! Britain is pre-eminently the land of freedom, felicity, and virtue. Let us repair thither with Lady Kinross; and may I soon have the joy of presenting the first friends of my soul and my nobly generous protector to my family in Ireland, and have the pride of convincing you all, that in Hibernia hospitality, gratitude, and affection are unbounded."

The princess, moved to tears, pressed Erina to her bosom with maternal fondness, as a testimony of thankfulness for her kind invitation to her native country and parental abode. Jaffier, touched to the acutest feelings of his energetic soul, by the proofs of tender affection towards his mother and himself, and deeply affected by the view of that adored parent locked in the embrace of the

maid of his idolatry, seized with enthusiasm the offered hand of Erina, and bowing on it respectfully, whilst still on his knee before her, he thus addressed her: "On this hand I vow eternal friendship and eternal devotion, although exiled from my country, and robbed of my dominions, I can never pretend to attach myself to you by other ties than those of highest admiration, and the most enthusiastic friendship. No; I can never offer to the object of my refined love, a state of degradation and privation. Having no longer a sovereign dignity to share with you, nor a palace to invite you to, I will, as a faithful friend and constant servant follow you, if you wish, to England. It is a land of happiness, security, and liberality; and a kingdom where unfortunate, persecuted, and destitute strangers are received with kindness, and protected nobly. Its sister island I elect as my future home; for the generous hospitality of Hibernia, I have heard, offers to every foreign visitor such a courteous welcome, as to render it the happiest place of abode to them.

Unable as I shall be to maintain princely splendor, I am assured, from the knowledge I have of the Irish character, that I shall be respected, according to the elevated rank I once held in the world: and I flatter myself, that through my

friends in this court, I may be enabled to gather, from the wrecks of my late possessions, sufficient to render my beloved mother and myself independant, in a genteel, though private station, in the vicinity of your family residence in Ireland; where I may, with my loved parent, still enjoy the best blessings of life, namely, liberty, health, and contentment; and exist still a useful member of society, in blessing others and myself, by virtuous exertions in the sphere allotted me."

Erina, through tears of admiration and affection, beheld the illustrious youth rise, if possible, from his fall; and be more the prince from the privation of his dominions; for she thought, he only is truly a sovereign, who can command himself; and he only is really great, who can exalt his mind in depressed circumstances, and elevate himself above every misfortune. Added to heroic virtue, true dignity of soul beamed from the animated glances of Jaffier's eyes, and played in his smile of filial reverence, enthusiastic friendship, and pious resignation to the will of Heaven. As his fond mother, glorying in such a son, fixed looks of maternal approbation and blessing on him, Erina contemplated in his charming countenance, and in his figure and air, a grandeur surpassing that of a prince; it was the elevation of a real hero, added

added to the sublimity of a saint. Whilst she felt that he was the most disinterested and engaging of lovers, the noblest of men, and almost regarded him as a celestial being, her quick ear caught the noise of an increasing tumult, which appeared to approach the palace gates, whilst, in the eye of the prince, she read surprise mingled with firmness of mind.

As they all listened in mute expectation, the sound of "Jaffier Mahomed is in the palace" resounded from a million voices; and repeated shouts, with an eager demand of the prince, broke in repeated vociferations from a multitude of people, gathered in a crowd in the great square of the palace, and pressing without opposition through the colonnades, leading from the principal square into the court of the princess's apartments.

Zeleida, terrified by the noise, ran into the pavilion-chamber from the garden, weeping and wringing her hands in the utmost consternation, and clung round Erina, who stood with her hands clasped in the amazement of silent dismay, whilst the princess, starting from her seat, rushed forward, calling on her son in accents of desperation. He, in the meanwhile undaunted, beheld the advancing throng; and walking with a firm, majestic

step to the arched entrance into the room, posted himself there; and drawing his scimitar, cried: "Be firm and tranquil, my mother, and my adored Erina! support each other, and unite your prayers, that my endeavours to guard you from all danger may avail. I am determined to maintain this station for your defence, although beset with a thousand sabres: Heaven will surely shield me from harm, and nerve my arm for the protection of innocence."

Having by this speech calmed the timid females, to a degree of passive courage which their virtue inspired, and of which they would have believed themselves incapable, had not necessity for an extraordinary exertion rendered it possible, Jaffier stood unmoved at the impetuous rushing forward of a numerous mob, whose clamour denoted, that all the populace of the great city of Azimabad, and all the soldiery of the palace, had mingled themselves in an unruly throng of rebellion against all order and authority.

The glittering of innumerable uplifted scimetars, brandished in the air in daring threats, shouts of tumult, groans of dismay, the shrieks of women, and piercing cries of children, mingled with the hisses and wild laughter of a horrid rabble,

uttering imprecations the most dreadful, and clamorously calling out the names of Jaffier, united with those of his brother, seemed to announce a bloody tragedy, and promise that all parties would perish in the growing uproar and confusion; and that after the carnage of a sanguinary conflict, the state of Azimabad would perish in the conflagration of the city, whilst the flames of civil war, lighted by the torch of Discord, would consume the palace, and afford a funeral pile at once to all the splendour of an ancient sovereignty, and the remaining princes of a lofty race.

As the prophetic soul of Jaffier whispered this to his fancy, he gave a sigh to the ruin of his country, which he loved in spite of its ingratitude to him; he lamented that the dust of his father should be stained with the crimson stream issuing from the hearts of those subjects he had so long and well protected; he prayed for the brother who was the author of his woes; and commending himself, and his mother, and lovely companion, to Providence, the idea of the dreadful fate impending over their heads, would have unmanned him to weep their threatened destruction, had not his enthusiasm made him recal to mind, that he stood armed as a soldier for the defence of that mother, and that maid he loved

to adoration; and that if it were the will of Heaven they should fall, he would not survive the objects of his tender solicitude, and that their ashes would mingle with his in death.

The princess, Erina, and Zeleida, clasped in each other's arms, beheld Jaffier expose himself to the evidently infuriated rabble, to prevent their entrance; and expected to see him fall, pierced with a hundred stabs, and trampled to death by the ungovernable mob, who appeared armed for their immediate destruction; for the populace, rushing towards the prince with wildness in their looks, and frenzy in their gestures, demanded the princess and her companions.

"The entrance here, my fellow citizens," cried Jaffier, waving his scimetar with an air of heroism and majestic dignity, "cannot be obtained, whilst my arm has power to guard the pass. I have only unsheathed my sword for my mother's defence, and can only be tempted to stain it with the blood of those who were my father's subjects, if they so far forget their allegiance to their country, and reverence to his memory, as to seek the destruction of the government which has so long protected them; or if they insult the relict of their late sovereign. I draw not my scimetar from its scab-

bard for the recovery of my rights, for I have long relinquished all idea of erecting my standard to gain the sovereignty to which I am the lawful heir; because I would not march to the throne of my ancestors through the blood of my people, by whom I was beloved, although that people have repaid my affection with ingratitude."

"Art thou Prince Jaffier?" demanded a ring-leader of the mob, stepping forward towards the illustrious youth.

"I am," cried the undaunted hero: "in me respect the voice of my late father, and pay me allegiance. I would not reign against the wishes of my country, but I would save it the horrid crime of murdering their princes; and demand nothing of a disloyal people, but a free passage for myself and parent, with her followers, out of this state; which we willingly resign to an usurper's rule, rather than light the torch of Discord, and unsheath the sword for the horrors of a civil war."

"Behold him we seek!" cried the chief of the mob, pointing with his naked scimetar to Jaffier; who, standing unmoved on the defensive, looked a king and hero.

His fond mother, agonized at the expected instantaneous massacre of her son, and only hope, shrieked with wild affright, and fainted in the arms of Erina, who, weeping, believed the moment of ruin and carnage arrived, and clasping the princess to her palpitating bosom, fixed, as she imagined, a last look on the prince; when suddenly, as if by one impulse, the whole multitude that filled the spacious court, and the arcades of the princess's palace, prostrated themselves to the earth; and quickly rising from their humble salutation, reiterated shouts of "Long live Jaffier Mahomed, our gallant and adored prince!" rent the air in loudest acclamations.

This sudden burst of loyalty brought tears to the eyes of Jaffier, and smiling his forgiveness and condescension on the surrounding multitude, he put up his scimetar in its sheath, and clasping his fainting mother in one arm, and Erina in the other, he brought them to the archway leading from the pavilion-chamber to the arcades surrounding the court, and thus addressed the populace, whose noisy clamour gave place to mute attention whilst he spoke:

"Behold, my fellow-citizens, the beloved objects in defence of whom I entered Azimabad,

and armed myself: those sacred objects of my solicitude I now confide to the guard of hearts warmed with the reverence of virtue and loyalty; and trust myself undefended to your affection, on which I rely for protection against my brother's infuriated hatred."

"May Jaffier Mahomed reign for ever over Azimabad! We will defend our illustrious prince with our fortunes and our lives; and, hurling the cruel usurper from his illegal authority, we will crush the sanguinary tyrant to the dust." This was the unanimous sentiment vociferated on all sides, whilst the princess, recovering from her swoon, heard her godlike son intercede for the preservation of that brother's life, who had from childhood hated and tormented him, and was then most cruelly wronging him. Whilst the magnanimous youth was exerting the first act of his sovereign power, to protect Mamoud from the destruction which that nefarious wretch had endeavoured to bring on his kind, long-suffering brother. The mob, having broken into the palace in search of the cowardly tyrant, who had taken refuge in his haram when he saw the populace gathering for an insurrection, dragged the trembling usurper from his hiding-place, and would have torn him to pieces whilst hurrying him towards

the restored prince, had not Jaffier, catching a glimpse of Mamoud in peril, committed his mother to the support of Erina's and Zeteida's arms, and rushed forward through the throng to shield him from the fury of the enraged multitude; who, indignant at his recent cruelties, could scarcely be restrained, even by the command of their revered, lawful, and acknowledged sovereign, from avenging his late wrongs, by the death of the offender.

Throwing himself prostrate at the feet of Jaffier, who, with his drawn sabre, shielded the shivering dastard from the fate he merited, he implored his brother's clemency with the abject meanness of a coward; whilst the reinstated prince shewed himself worthy to rule by the command he had over himself, and proving that he was truly magnanimous, in the entire forgiveness of his brother.

"Rise," said the illustrious Jaffier, with a benignant smile, "rise still a prince. Thy life, thy happiness shall be my care. I wade not to the inheritance bequeathed me by a father's voice through the blood of his son, although he be my cruellest enemy. Unlike many sovereigns of hese countries, who seldom suffer a brother near the throne, I would share my power with my

loved late parent's offspring. Come therefore, Mamoud, to my heart," cried Jaffier, gracefully bending to raise his still prostrate brother from the earth, and embracing him, said, " In this embrace let all thy rancour against me be forgotten by thee, as it is pardoned by me. An offence repented merits forgiveness. My fellow-citizens," continued the heroically illustrious youth, presenting Mamoud to the encircling throng with sweetness and dignity admirably united, " respect in the son of my late father the brother of Jaffier."

The populace, moved by the example of his virtue, murmured unanimous applause; and general and entire satisfaction was shouted through all the echoing roofs and walls of the extensive palace, which rang to reiterated bursts of loyal acclamations, as the soldiery hailed the establishment of Jaffier in the ancient dominion of his ancestors.

This most unexpected and sudden change of his fortune, which seemed to intoxicate his subjects with joy, excited in the noble soul of the hero an ecstacy of universal benevolence, filial affection, and enthusiastic love, so blended with religious feelings, that in the moment of his triumph, whilst surrounded by every circumstance that could gratify him, he remembered to attri-

bute his preservation to the power of Heaven, and devoutly thanked the Great and Invisible Bestower of the felicity he enjoyed. Preserving the equanimity of his superior mind, he was as little elated by unexpected, and the highest prosperity, as he had been undepressed by sudden, unforeseen, and the cruellest adversity. Attentive to the good of his subjects, as to the cares of his domestic concerns, he desired that if any remained adverse to him, they should be treated with lenity, and heard with rapture, that his re-establishment had not cost one drop of blood, and that his subjects were unanimous in submission to him.

Having been conducted in triumph with his delighted mother, Erina, and Zeleida, to the great hall of the palace, he sent for all the officers of the court, who appeared trembling before them. Instead, however, of revenging their defection, he passed an act of amnesty, promising to retain in their posts those whom he found competent to their station, and men of probity.

Amongst the crowd of courtiers who came to congratulate the prince on his accession, Ibrahim, the prime minister of his late father, was the first of his friends to compliment him. Jaffier received

this faithful servant with an affection almost filial, and instantly reinstated him in the high office he had most honourably filled for many years; delighting in the power of remunerating him with the rest of his disinterested adherents, who confessed that they had laid the plan of establishing him in his dominions, in opposition to his wishes; and had taken advantage of his being in the palace to stir up the insurrection against the usurper, as they were assured that the presence of a lawful sovereign, would recal a deluded people to submission to the rightful prince; and that his known lenity would restrain the populace from the commission of great disorder in the tumult of discontent against the tyrant, which had long been kindled by his cruelty, and was ready to burst forth in his destruction, and the annihilation of the state.

The first business of his establishment in the government being completed, the prince spent some hours with his loved mother and Erina, in that domestic retirement and endearing intercourse, which conveyed the highest rapture to their susceptible souls.

In the morning succeeding, arrayed in the regalia of soverign pomp, blooming in the prime

of youth, with all the dignity of his princely state, and all the heroism of his superior virtue, he repaired to the durbar, where he had convened a full council and general assembly.

The hall of justice, superb in architecture, and magnificent in its decorations, had a latticed gallery in the dome, whence all might be seen and heard, that passed in this place of public audience and debate. From this gallery the princess, Erina, Zeleida, and the female attendants of the court, beheld Jaffier Mahomed mount the throne of his ancestors, which his princely air, his superlatively handsome countenance and figure, his superior sense, his numberless brilliant talents, and his pre-eminent virtues were calculated to adorn.

The chair of state, glittering with gold, and studded with precious gems, was raised on an elevation of several steps, which were covered with the skins of the tiger and leopard joined in fanciful compartments. On the back of the chair was perched a peacock with an extended train, in the curious workmanship of which the artist's ingenuity had displayed at once the most costly and rarest productions of nature, and all the genius of art, in a superlatively beautiful and precious production. This chair was canopied by a dra-

pery of scarlet velvet, richly embroidered and fringed with gold, supported in the center by a large golden eagle, hovering with extended wings, and on either side of the throne by palm-trees glittering with the same precious metal highly burnished, and curiously wrought, to represent the waving branches of the tree as capitals to the pillars playing on an elastic spring.

Having ascended this magnificent throne, and gracefully received the homage of the crowded assembly, the prince addressed the nobles, officers, and all the orders of the state, whom he had convened in council. Declaring himself a Christian, he expressed his intention to resign the government in the cause of his religion, if it occasioned discontent, and retire to a private station in a Christian country rather than relinquish his faith, or hazard a public commotion. Whilst he spoke, eloquence the most energetic, polished, and persuasive, flowed in his expressions, voice, and gestures, aided to engage all hearts by the most captivating display of superlative beauty, accomplishments, grace, genius, and virtue. A low murmur ran through the assembly—Jaffier paused in his speech, and looked around with dignity until a perfect silence suffered him thus to proceed :

" I would not conceal my faith to retain the empire of the world; but boast my conversion to the true religion, though by thus doing I may forfeit all my possessions, and my life itself. But although I have convened this full assembly to declare my Christian belief, I mean no persecution of other religions; for Christianity is mild, benevolent, patient, and sublimely charitable."

A buz of applause circulated round the echoing hall; and every eye, rivetted on the prince, expressed affection and contentment, except the scowling gaze of Mamoud Cawn, beneath whose dark lowering brow glanced flashes of envious hate, envenomed jealousy, and vengeful ire; which seemed to speak future rebellion lurking under treason and cruelest treachery. Jaffier, perceiving and penetrating the malevolent discontent of the dethroned tyrant, thus addressed him with a smile of sweet benignity. " You, my brother, have no cause to mourn my conversion to that religion, which, suppressing vengeance, commands the forgiveness and love of a sinning brother, and acts of mercy to a malignant enemy." Then turning to the encircling assembly, he thus continued. " My wish, in convening this council, was to settle a princely provision upon Mamoud Cawn, and im-

part to him a portion of the power devolving on me by our father's will."

The magnanimous Jaffier then proceeded to the detailed arrangements for his brother's state and independant establishment, hoping to win him to affection and virtue by a kindness unparalleled. And having executed all the benevolent intentions of his noble soul, in a manner equally gracious and munificent, he retired from the durbar the idol of his subjects, hailed by the tenderest looks, the best blessings, and the loudest acclamations of a loyal and delighted people; amongst whom Mamoud himself was obliged to confess the virtues of his brother, and his pre-eminent abilities to fill the throne, to which he had been conducted by the love of every individual in the state.

Having dispatched all the public business of the morning, Jaffier relaxed from the pompous forms of sovereign state to give the remainder of the day to domestic cares, social attentions, and the delights of sentiment. In the apartments of his mother, in addition to the splendor of the prince, he assumed the filial tenderness of the most duteous son, and all the captivating graces of the most enthusiastically assiduous lover. Wooed by such a being to a participation of every enjoyment

that this world can afford, Erina blushing and smiling through tears of ecstacy, that rendered her beauty superlatively brilliant, assured her illustrious suitor that she could not refuse his addresses if she would, nor would reject them if she could. Environed by all that could charm the senses, and delight the soul, she resigned it to those sensations of a pure and ardent love, which embellishes all things, and gives them additional interest in our estimation. If any thing could have intoxicated the energetic mind of Jaffier, it would have been his passion for Erina. Jaffier believed, and confessed himself inebriated with rapture; but he was still the being of superior wisdom, in whom intellect shewed its powers strengthened rather than weakened by the captivation of his heart. The enthusiastic Erina also felt her soul expanded and ennobled by her affection for the illustrious youth, whom she had long regarded with the tenderest sentiments, without the smallest hope that duty would authorize her to bestow her hand on the only being in the world who possessed her heart. She would have thought herself unjust, and consequently culpable, had she felt less affection for the amiable lover, to whom she owed her repeated preservation; but she would have believed herself equally culpable in permitting her attachment to induce her to an union, which her religion prohi-

bited: thus situated, Erina had cherished hopeless love, almost as an obligation to sentiment and duty. Those no longer in opposition, and all her feelings harmonized into perfect agreement, she now equally delighted and gloried in the mutual attachment, which was experienced in its utmost sublimity in her soul, as in that of the prince. When she considered his innumerable perfections, his various powerful claims on all her gratitude and love, she felt assured that every one interested in her welfare, must sanction her affection for the only being who could afford her happiness.

In that enchanting interchange of every thought between united hearts, which constitutes the most perfect confidence, and in that secret intelligence of sympathy, which blends two souls in one essence, where every glance is a mutual sentiment, where every touch is reciprocal transport, and where the enthusiasm of chaste desire, paints encreasing rapture in gay and endless perspective to the eye of youthful hope and sanguine expectation, in that bewitching state, the ardent Jaffier and his tender Erina saw their felicity multiplied in the enjoyment of those around them. Albion, Zeleida, Ismael, and the happy and amiable princess, enchanted with the present anticipated encreasing joys; and from the apartments of the palace, as

the evening closed, beheld the surrounding city of Azimabad in a blaze of illumination, to celebrate the accession of Jaffier to the throne of his ancestors.

As Erina gazed on the splendid scene, and felt the gentle tremulous pressure of her illustrious lover's hand, whilst love and transport beaming from his eyes, and mantling in his enraptured blush of manly beauty, sunk on her heart in thrilling ecstacy, she felt that *felicity and prosperity are harder trials for the human mind than misery and adversity. In unhappiness and misfortune the heart, in need of consolation, has recourse to religion as the best solace; and finds in piety the fortitude to suffer with patience and resignation: but, in the midst of enjoyment and success, the world, by innumerable allurements, seduces us from serious reflection, and the intoxicating cup of pleasure, too frequently, degrades our nature; and makes us less vigilant in duties when we should be most so: for, with the accession of riches and power, our obligations multiply, and our temptations to neglect them increase in a duplicate proportion.*

CHAP. X.

"Every heart owes a tribute of gratitude to those who fall in the service of their country; and when a hero's urn rises to the view of posterity, the marble consecrated to his memory, perpetuates the valour that animated his dust; because, from it, embalmed with tears, future heroes spring in endless succession, to eternize their country's fame."

INEBRIATED, as the Prince of Azimabad declared himself, by his adoration being accepted by Erina, and absorbed as she believed herself by her admiration of her illustrious lover, neither of them could, even in the first transports of their enthusiastic affection, forget the duties of friendship in the assiduities of love. A courier was dispatched by Jaffier, immediately on his establishment in his rights, to communicate this intelligence to de Briançon; and Erina, in the high flutter of her spirits, wrote a circumstantial account

of all that had occurred to her since the letter addressed to Rosaline from the place where de l'Armencour had been found. In this relation Jaffier was the hero of Erina's elegantly narrated tale; and his sublime character, with that of his amiable mother, were delineated with a power, which equally displayed the writer's genius, and her enthusiastic attachment to the princess and her son; at whose request, Erina earnestly solicited the presence of Rosaline and the viscount at the palace for a long abode. This invitation brought them to Azimabad with as much speed and joy as their friends at the palace waited the arrival of their expected guests with impatience, and received them with delight. In the felicity of this meeting each party felt, that all the miseries of their separation were repaid. Lady Kinross and de Briançon were welcomed by the prince with an embrace of fraternal affection. Rosaline and Erina long locked in each other's arms, and saluted by the viscount with the most joyous congratulations, wept and laughed their happiness and tenderness; whilst the engaging mother of Jaffier with equal grace and affability received the visitors as her dearest friends, because they were bound in ties of closest amity with her darling son and her idolized Erina.

The princess's graciousness of manner, her attractive appearance, her resemblance to the superlatively handsome prince, and a likeness which could easily be traced between her and her sister and niece, and which seemed to render Lady Herbert and the charming and beloved Seraphina present to her faithful friends Rosaline and Erina; made them regard her with an affection, which appeared to concenter in it all they experienced for Jaffier, and those whose absence they lamented.

After the first ecstasy of this meeting had sufficiently subsided into tranquil enjoyment, to permit the mention of a subject not nearly concerning their happiness, Erina heard with strong and mingled emotions, that de l'Armencour was no more—that he had died a sincere penitent, but without that consolatory hope of salvation, which beams joy to the pious in the most suffering dissolution. She dropped a tear of commiseration on the fate of her persecutor, and embalmed his memory with gratitude, that obliterated the remembrance of all his offences against her, and the sufferings they had occasioned; when she heard from de Briançon, who attended him in his dying moments at Chandenagore, to which place he had been removed just before his decease in the preceding week; that his death was not so much

occasioned by the languor in consequence of his wounds, as by remorse for having, as he believed, caused her destruction.

This melancholy subject was the only distressful theme that saddened the joyous meeting of the friends.

The spacious and superb palace through its entire range, presented a scene of magnificent festivity, to celebrate the arrival of its noble visitors. A sumptuous banquet, served with all the splendid pomp of Eastern luxury and grandeur, offered a princely refreshment to Jaffier's guests, whilst his graceful courtesy, his elegance of taste, his refinement of sentiment, and the brilliancy of his wit, gave an additional zest to the entertainment.

Zeleida, delighting in the reunion of her friends, and habituated to be seen in public, joined the party, having acquired the taste for, and adopted the manners of a European.

Jaffier, more brilliant than ever in the bloom of manly beauty, radiant with happiness, and most splendid in his habit, united in his looks and address all that could charm in all the various characters of a sovereign, a son, a lover, and a friend.

Whilst Erina, beautiful as exquisite symmetry of features, the most perfect proportions of figure, the most finished grace of air, set off with the freshest bloom of youth, could render her; appeared like sentiment and virtue personified in a celestial form. The consciousness of loving and being adored by the noblest and most perfect of human beings, increased her every charm. Her dress was Eastern, in compliment to the prince, and in every look, gesture, and expression, she was worthy of her illustrious lover.

To describe all the magnificence of the scenes in the palace of Azimabad would be as difficult as an attempt to detail all the various enjoyments of its inhabitants. The moments were marked by a succession of pleasures, and every spot in and about the sumptuous edifice, presented all that the imagination in its highest flights, could conceive as most superb and delightful.

Surrounded by whatever could charm, Erina ever thankfully remembered, and humbly adored the Giver of all her blessings; and recollecting all her duties, she lost no time in transmitting a particular account of herself to her grandfather, as he was the only parent she could address, since all intercourse with her mother had been interdicted.

The exquisite sensibility, which made her susceptible of felicity to a degree of ecstasy, was the source frequently of unhappiness in an extreme. With a heart thus alive to feeling, she often experienced much uneasiness on the subject of her relations; and an anxious impatience to receive intelligence of them, which might now be daily expected, added to the painful uncertainty respecting them, and their opinion of her conduct, sometimes threw a soft sadness over her countenance, and at moments obscured the natural vivacity of her disposition. At these moments, when the lustre of her sparkling eyes beamed through glistening tears, and they fell empearled upon the roseat blush that mantled on her cheeks from agitated thoughts, as her sighs rose to the fond remembrance of her parents and her brother, her lover's glances, irradiated by tenderest sympathy, declared love refined by delicacy of sentiment, while the heightening glow of his youthful bloom and soft responsive sigh, with the gentle pressure of his hand, added to the air of sensibility that spoke in every gesture, rendered this occasional melancholy a luxurious enjoyment, as the most interesting testimony of an affection equally delicate as it was empassioned.

In return for the prince's readiness to share the

anxieties of Erina, her heart expanded always to partake his joys, and taste the ever varying pleasures, his assiduities continually contrived to cheer her spirits, and dissipate her anxieties. Erina's existence was a state of more than mortal enjoyment. But the promoter and the soul of her felicity was soon called from the scene his presence rendered delightful.

The Nabob of Muradpore visited his kinsman on his accession to sovereign dignity, to congratulate him on that event, and to enter into a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with him. The bonds of consanguinity, those of personal attachment, and the claims of gratitude, for that prince's late hospitable reception of Jaffier, induced this illustrious youth to act against his inclination, in preparing to march with the nabob, in a meditated attack upon the English, then at war with the state of Muradpore.

Jaffier's mother, Erina, and even Rosaline, were disconsolate at the prospect of his departure. He himself experienced all that a son, a lover, and a friend could feel, at the idea of separating himself from objects so endeared to his heart: but Jaffier had a soul that embraced every duty, and answered all its claims; and feeling those of his kinsman to

his services, he prepared to take the field with him, although it cost him innumerable pangs to tear himself from a mother, whose happiness was centered in him; and although in a separation from Erina, he absented himself from all felicity, he would not have purchased even the supreme enjoyment of her society by the neglect of his military obligations; for Jaffier was equally a hero and a lover, and had equal enthusiasm in his duty as a soldier, as in the ardour of his passion.

Before his departure for the field, he settled every thing to ensure the safety of his country, the order of his capital, and the security of his mother, and her amiable companions: and having, with an universality of genius, and a mind that comprehended all the wide range of each science and every art, planned and ordered some alterations and new arrangements in the palace, under an idea, that in the munificent encouragement of industry, ability, and taste, a prince's grandeur affords advantages of essential service to his country and subjects, the admirable Jaffier made every necessary military preparation for his campaign; in which Mamoud, who was to accompany him, by his noble indulgence, obtained a high command, as a testimony of the generous confidence reposed in the professions of repentance, and the marks of

attachment he had lately evinced towards Jaffier. This illustrious youth, kind as he was magnanimous, wished to correct the heart of his brother, and to bind him to fraternal regard by benefits; and when his mother warned him to beware of Mamoud's treachery, so often proved, the admirable Jaffier, with filial duty, assured his parent he would watch over his safety for her sake; but that reverence for his father's memory would always command his kindness to his brother. "Besides," added the heroic youth, pressing and kissing the hand of the princess, united with that of the tearfully smiling Erina, "I must remember I am a Christian, and that I am bound to practice the doctrines of the faith I profess. The repeated forgiveness of our brethren, and the obligation of loving our enemies, and doing good to those who have injured us, is so frequently enforced in the gospel, that it ought to be more attended to than it is by the professors of Christianity. Our faith cannot avail, unless it actuate us to obedience."

The morning of the prince's departure for the camp arrived, and amidst all the bustle of military parade, he was seen accoutred for the field, reviewing his troops for their march as the dawn appeared. Erina, whom mingled emotions had rendered wakeful, beheld the illustrious hero of

her affection marshalling his army, as the poets would represent the fabled god of war. Mounted on a black charger of the Arabian breed, which seemed to breathe spirit and dart fire from his eyes, whilst his prancing tread appeared to spurn the ground, Jaffier, clad in radiant vestments of sovereign and military pomp, looked the prince and hero, surrounded by his train and soldiers. The various dresses of the officers of state glittering in gold and silver to the morning sun of an Asiatic sky, bright with illumined æther, the ranks of sepoys, both infantry and cavalry, mixed with some regiments of French soldiers, who were associated as auxiliaries in this army against the English, under the command of de Briançon, the numbers of elephants armed for battle, the camels and sumpter horses for the baggage, the camp equipages, and the martial music of the Asiatic and European bands, which alternately awakened the echoes of the surrounding palace with the din of various instruments, and warlike sounds, all this roused innumerable sensations of acutest sensibility in the minds of the princess and her two lovely companions; who, sometimes forgetful of their own feelings, endeavoured to console the sorrowing mother.

In her apartments were seen all her attendants

drowned in tears, amongst whom Zeleida, Ismael, and Albion wept the most.

The prince soon appeared in her chamber, followed by de Briançon and Mamoud Cawn, who, having speedily made his obeisance departed, leaving the viscount and Jaffier to make their adieus. De Briançon, ever volatile, smiled a kind and gay farewel to the princess, Rosaline, and Erina. More the soldier than the man of sentiment, military ardour rather than the tenderness of affection, shewed itself in his looks, words, and manner, even when he addressed an adieu to Lady Kinross, although Erina remarked, she had never seen him more gallant than when kissing the hand of the weeping and kindly gracious Rosaline, he said, "should I fall, my beautiful cousin, in the field of battle, it will be the last wish I shall form, that you may soon be consoled for my loss, and find a protector as affectionate and faithful to your interests as I have been."

Erina with Rosaline burst into a passion of tears at this farewel, which, to their gentle hearts, seemed prophetic of a lasting separation. Through this flood of tears they beheld the princess hanging in an agony of grief on the neck of her son; who, kneeling on one knee, pressed the hands of his

mother in silence to his breast. At length, in faltering accents, he bid her adieu; then springing up, he seized the hands of Rosaline and Erina, and carried them to his lips with fervor, recommending his parent to their care.

This parting brought to Erina's mind her father's last adieus, and a train of recollections; and anticipating which, overwhelmed her with grief to such a degree, that she was near fainting in the arms of Jaffier, when, detaching her crucifix from her bosom, she presented it to him as a parting gift, and felt his lips imprint a kiss of pure and ardent affection on her glowing cheek. Covering her face with the flowing veil she wore, she did not see him leave the chamber with an action of frenzied regret: but a wish to behold him once more, made the weeping girl repair hastily to a varando, where she could in solitude weep and view his departure. From this elevated station, she beheld the illustrious youth, animated with all a soldier's enthusiasm, vault on his steed, and give the word for marching. The military cavalcade, put in motion by the voice of their commander, set forward to the inspiring strains of martial music; and Jaffier's charger, bounding to the well-known measured cadence of warlike harmony, pranced onward with graceful curvets, whilst his rider, uniting

the fire of the hero with the ardour of an empassioned lover, directing his glances to the edifice Erina inhabited, spied her graceful figure pensively watching his motions, and saluting her with the most elegantly martial air, he kissed the gift she had bestowed on him with a grace that combined the courtesy of ancient chivalry, with the blended sentiments of true heroism, love, and piety, each strengthened to all the ardour of enthusiasm by the other.

Erina, fixed to the spot whence she beheld this touching sight, followed it with her eyes until distance hid from her view the object of her tenderest affection. Imagination, however, still rendered him present to her. She recollected a thousand things which she had wished to say to him, but which sorrow had prevented her uttering: she had wished to recommend Wilmot to his kindness, if chance should throw them together in conflict; but as she always carefully guarded against recalling him to Rosaline's remembrance, she had been compelled to silence on the subject of her brother's bosom friend at the moment of Jaffier's departure; and she would have more lamented the prevention of commending Wilmot to the prince, had she not felt assured that Jaffier's sentiments of noble generosity would make him avoid, rather than

pursue to destruction, the amiable youth who had evinced such affection for her brother, and who was so highly regarded by the family of Lord Herbert: for Erina knew that the prince had conceived the warmest interest for the young officer whose history she had fully detailed; and flattered herself his highland uniform, together with the description of his person, would point him out to Jaffier's knowledge, if fate should bring them together in the field.

The horrors of war became magnified in Erina's imagination, when she reflected that the approaching conflict, on the neighbouring plains, would involve in contest, those in whose fate she was deeply interested on every side; for her attachment to the Britons as her countrymen, independent of Wilmot's being enrolled under their banners, made her shudder at the idea of their being opposed to de Briançon, whom she warmly regarded as a kind friend, and to the prince, in whose success all possible sentiments concurred to render her most anxiously solicitous. Drowned in floods of tears she remained in her post of solitary observation, and agonizing reflection, until the departing army was lost to her view; and she recollected, that she had partners in grief, whom it was the duty of friendship to console. In obedience

to the injunctions of Jaffier she flew to the princess, and endeavoured to chase from the heart of his fond mother the grief which an affection, warmer than maternal tenderness, made the lovely girl sympathize in most sincerely; and she found in the exertion of duty, that elasticity of spirits which on many former occasions, had surprisingly supported her under afflictions, that like the present, would have overwhelmed her, but for the efforts of a virtue which always is its own reward.

Daily intelligence from the camp contributed also to cheer the spirits of the princess, and her companions, whom Jaffier and de Briançon addressed in a succession of journals; wherein all that wit and sentiment could dictate as most refined, charmed the genius and sensibility of the female mourners; who always with smiles, with tears, and glowing hearts perused and re-perused these effusions of the prince's wonderful talents, and most enthusiastic feelings, to which the gaiety of the volatile de Briançon's pen gave a pleasing variety.

Through these regular dispatches, the princess and her associates at length heard, that the English had been compelled to retreat before the combined armies of Muradpore and Azimabad, and that having obliged the British forces to evacuate the territory respecting the possession of which the

war had been declared, the nabob expected to be able to make an advantageous peace; and that in the interval of the treaty entered into between the English and belligerent powers, the Prince of Azimabad would return to his capital to enjoy the prospect of peace in the bosom of love and felicity. The letter from Jaffier containing this intelligence, brought also the news that his friend, the viscount, was wounded. The prince mentioned this event in the most delicately guarded manner, and with an interest which shewed him extremely affected: but although he expressed his hopes that de Briançon was not in much danger, and added, that he made very light of the injury he had received, the gentle Rosaline experienced extreme alarm on his account, from the persuasion that he must be more seriously wounded, than the prince's tenderness allowed him to own to them, as she was certain the viscount would otherwise have added a postscript to the letter to set their mind at ease respecting him. Erina and the princess endeavoured to console the sorrow of Rosaline, feeling at the same time with her, that Jaffier's expressions were evidently intended to apprise them of de Briançon's being in great danger; because, as they were on their return, it would not have been at all necessary to awaken their fears by the mention of his being wounded, unless such conse-

quences had attended, it as to render it necessary to prepare them for seeing him extremely ill. These apprehensions they soon learned were not groundless, for the prince himself arrived as a messenger of worse news respecting the viscount, than he had ventured to write; and hastened before him a few hours to give notice of his approach, and to prepare Rosaline for the trial that awaited her, by all the delicate attentions of friendship that could prevent her experiencing too great a shock in beholding de Briançon reduced to a state of extreme weakness, and immediate danger.

The triumphal entry of Jaffier into his palace, where all possible grandeur of sovereign state marked his return, the congratulatory and flatteringly greeting acclamations of an affectionate people, and the anticipation of the tenderest welcome of friendship and of love, could scarcely cheer the brow of Jaffier, when seated on his elephant, he entered the gates of his palace, and saluted the populace thronging to behold him, and pay him homage on his return from war. As he graciously returned the obeisance of the greeting crowd of subjects that pressed around him, as he leaped with eager haste from his elevated seat on the majestic creature, that had brought the prince

home in speed, he raised his eyes towards the grand chamber of his palace, where the princess and her companions, with all the court and the ministers, waited to welcome him in state; and catching a glimpse of his mother, Rosaline, and Erina, he tearfully smiled a salutation of infinite sentiment; and springing towards the endeared circle with the bounding step of eager filial duty, enthusiastic friendship, and impatient ardent love, he dropped one knee most gracefully, and, in an eastern obeisance saluting the groupe that flew to encircle him, he alternately grasped and pressed to his bosom, forehead, and lips, the hands of the princess, Rosaline, and Erina, smiling a salute to each of the surrounding courtiers, amongst whom his minister, Ibrahim, and his particular friends, shared an embrace; while the gentle Zeleida was tenderly noticed by a courteous compliment, and Ismael, with Albion, received tokens of regard: the prince uniting to the utmost dignity of a sovereign's deportment that affable grace, which paying attention to all, made each feel particularly noticed with some mark of condescending favour.

The embrace and congratulations of a fond mother; the sweet accents of affection breathing from the dimpling roseat lips of the brilliantly blooming Erina, although transporting to the ardent soul of Jaffier, did not prevent his sympa-

thizing tenderly in the affliction of the gentle Rosaline, on her hearing that de Briançon was in a languishing state of imminent peril.

With an elegant softness, that endeared him to the heart of Erina, he endeavoured to soothe the alarm and grief of Lady Kinross: and when he believed her sufficiently composed to bear an interview with the viscount, the prince, who had contrived every thing relative to the meeting, which he imagined could spare their mutual feelings, announced the arrival of de Briançon, and led her to the apartment where he was prepared to receive his female visitors.

Still gay, although infinitely suffering from excessive debility and the pain of his wounds, which had not at first been judged mortal, but which now promised to be speedily fatal, the viscount greeted the princess, Erina, and Rosaline, with smiles of affection, and kindly endeavoured to dry the tears each shed, at the view of his pallid countenance and weakened frame.

"This is the fortune of war *ma belle cousine*," cried he, kissing, with lively gallantry, the hand of the gentle Rosaline, who wept on his shoulder. "But for my sake," added he, more moved than

he had ever appeared; "dry your tears; I shall expire in honour, as a soldier should—and I shall die in peace as a Christian; for I trust I have fulfilled my duties. My obligations towards you, my dear Rosaline, I certainly have not failed in performing." Lady Kinross, weeping in an agony of grief, pressed the cold hand of de Briançon to her bosom, in token of the affection and gratitude which affliction prevented her uttering, and the viscount thus continued: "To you I am indebted for much happiness. Yes! Rosaline, our union has had for me peculiar charms, those of entire confidence and tender friendship; I possessed as much of your affection as was necessary for my happiness, and as I merited; I have been ever faithfully attentive to your felicity; and should have continued so, had it pleased Heaven to spare me longer in the sacred trust of protecting you; as it is otherwise, I am contented. True, however, to that trust you have reposed in me, I would desire before I die, which I feel will be soon, to deliver up my charge to a being worthy of you, and one whom I believe formed to bestow on you that felicity, which the volatility of my character unfitted me to afford you."

"May Heaven grant you life, my dear Bri-

ançon," cried Rosaline, eagerly interrupting him, " still to protect and make me happy."

The viscount shook his head: " No, my dear Rosaline," said he; " I feel my death quickly approaching. An anxious wish to see you, and take my last farewel of you and my friend Erina, in consigning you to the protection of one I esteem, made me urge the prince to remove me hither, that I might die in peace. My illustrious friend," added de Briançon, pointing to Jaffier, " kindly complied with my request: Heaven has favoured my intention also in permitting me to live, almost against my expectation, to arrive here and meet your presence. And now, my dear Rosaline, grant my last request, and allow me to resign your hand to the object of my choice." Rosaline, drowned in tears, answered only with her sobs: and de Briançon making a sign to the prince, the latter retired, and in a moment returned, leading in Frederick Wilmot, who started, in astonishment, at the scene to which he was introduced.

His name, uttered in surprise by Erina, made the princess eagerly step forward to greet him courteously, whilst he sprung towards the affecting groupe of the wounded viscount, supported in

the arms of Erina and Zeleida, with Rosaline, fixed in an attitude of astonishment, and mingled pain and pleasure, as she hung over the couch on which de Briançon reclined.

Whilst Wilmot seized the hand of the viscount, with an expression of anxious enquiry in his looks, he bowed to Erina and Rosaline with a blushing confusion that rendered him silent; when the prince, addressing the circle, proceeded to explain circumstances which, to some of the parties, appeared to require elucidation.

"The history which the lovely Erina gave me of Wilmot," said Jaffier, "interested me so deeply, that I was eager to see him; and, from her description, he was so accurately pointed out to me, I recognized him the instant my good fortune brought us together. The manner of our meeting need not be mentioned, as it is foreign to our present business. It will be sufficient to say, he introduced himself to me as the most gallant officer in the English forces, whom it was my misfortune to oppose against my inclination. Our common friend, de Briançon, made us more intimately acquainted; and, in the conflict that brought us together, received those wounds from which he now suffers.

" The assiduous cares of the gallant British officer to the French commander, when he fell disabled on the field of battle, proved the worth of our opponent in arms, whom the fortune of war had put into our power, although his valour had most nobly opposed us until his being surrounded, by superior numbers of the enemy, rendered all conflict vain.

" Wilmot attended de Briançon to his tent, and watched over him with a brother's anxiety, whilst military duty prevented my being the associate of his cares in the service of our wounded friend. When the conclusion of the battle permitted me to return to our quarters, I hastened to de Briançon, whom I found persuaded that his wounds were mortal. He retained his spirits, although convinced his dissolution was approaching quickly. This conviction made him confide to me, that his marriage with Lady Kinross was merely a nominal union, and a connection of friendship alone entered into, on his idea and solicitation, by mutual agreement, to extricate his cousin Rosaline and her friend from a situation of difficulty.

" De Briançon having thus confided to me a circumstance, which the delicacy of Lady Kinross

towards Erina, and motives of prudence, had rendered her anxious to keep a profound secret, he entrusted his cousin, as a sacred charge, to my protection, believing himself nearly expiring.

"Notwithstanding I was alarmed at his situation, I endeavoured to give him hopes of recovery, as the surgeons told us his wounds were not apparently mortal. This opinion, however, they soon changed; and considering him in imminent danger, I sent advice of his situation, to prepare Lady Kinross for the loss of a friend, for whom I was assured she had the truest regard.

To make his mind as easy as possible respecting his gentle cousin, I disclosed to him the attachment of Wilmot for Lady Kinross, which I had learned from her lovely friend, as I was certain it would afford the affectionate heart of de Briançon pleasure, to believe that Wilmot would supply the cares and attentions requisite to console Rosaline for the loss of her faithful protector. According to my expectations, the viscount was charmed at the prospect of the fate awaiting his fair cousin: as he had conceived the highest esteem for Wilmot, and believed him formed to bless Rosaline, de Briançon delighted himself with the plan of bringing together by surprise; and wishing to

to witness and compleat their happiness, he contrived a scheme for their interview in his presence, which has been put into execution, at his particular request, without mentioning a word of his intentions to Wilmot; who came hither ignorant of the felicity prepared for him by the viscount's friendship.

"Come, my dear Wilmot!" exclaimed de Briançon, holding out his hand to the youth, silenced by astonishment and emotion, "come and receive from my hand that of a being, whose virtues and affection will recompense yours." Receive the gift of Rosaline's hand from me as a testimony of my regard, and as a reward for the fraternal assiduity with which you have attended the couch of a suffering man, whose fate it was to be enlisted in a camp, adverse to that you have so nobly defended; and, in protecting which, you have fallen into the hands of one, who, although nominally an enemy, is your truest friend."

"Yes!" exclaimed the prince with energetic expression, "you do indeed behold in me a true friend, and a near connection, for you see in me, my dear Wilmot, the nephew of Lord Herbert. Permit me to introduce to you my mother, as the sister of Lady Herbert; and forgive the conceal-

ment of a circumstance, which I intended to reserve as an agreeable surprise at this anticipated introduction."

Wilmot, whom a succession of surprise had silenced, looked equal delight and astonishment. The flush of amazement, heightened by the glow of innumerable emotions, added to the sweetest smile of gratitude and affection, and the starting tear of sensibility, that glistened in his fine azure eyes, gave to his countenance an expression quite divine; while his whole figure, and every varying attitude, was most engagingly graceful, as he in silence saluted each of the circle, endeared to his soul by innumerable sentiments. At length, after gestures of mute eloquence, that to every heart spoke volumes of feelings, that could not be translated into language of the highest enthusiasm, without losing that spirit of exquisite sensibility, which sensation can alone seize and define, Wilmot, grasping a hand of the prince and de Briançon, thus addressed them.

"I feel myself indeed surrounded by friends, to whom my soul is bound by innumerable ties of gratitude and affection. I have to thank your highness for nobly treating me as a brother, instead of considering me as an enemy and a pri-

soner: and I must make my acknowledgments to those, whose kindness has introduced me to the esteem of such an illustrious friend as the Prince of Azimabad." Wilmot bowed most graceful thanks to Erina, and thus proceeded; "I think myself also infinitely indebted to the Viscount de Briançon, for the flattering testimony of his regard, although I dare not pretend to the honour his generosity would confer on me. No; the felicity of soliciting the hand of Lady Kinross is above my claims. When I was totally ignorant of her ladyship's elevated rank, and her situation, I had the audacity to obey the impulse of my heart, and offer it at the shrine of her perfections. On that occasion, I confessed my temerity in pleading my passion, and disclosed my circumstances: I avowed myself an entire dependant on the bounty of a kind patron, and as a being of equivocal pretensions to the station I held in the world. Had fate permitted me to pursue the bright prize, to which I then aspired, I should have been more explicit as to my situation in life; I should then have felt myself as I now do, called upon by honour to declare, that, although most generously patronized by Lord Herbert, I could not claim the most distant relationship to my noble protector; and I should have felt myself bound to acknowledge the manner in which I was taken into his favour, from the most

indigent state of mendicity. I feel myself now called on to give my history; which is briefly this. In the year 17—, I was brought to the gate of a villa near London, then inhabited by the late Lord Herbert, in the arms of a strolling gipsy, who moved compassion, by appearing as if nearly expiring: she proved to be in fact, near dissolution, and was humanely attended to. My infant and forlorn condition excited the pity of the household of Lord Herbert; who, being informed of my case, came to the place where the gipsy was dying with me in her arms. The housekeeper, who with the other servants had gathered round the mendicant to assist her, remarked to his lordship, that I seemed like the child of some gentleman, and she was certain the gipsy had stolen me from my parents. Persuaded of this from my features, complexion, manners, and dress, she taxed the gipsy with having obtained me by theft; which the dying beggar did not deny, confessing she had seduced me a few months before from the door of a farm house, near the coast in Devonshire, where I was playing unattended: she said, that having enticed me as far as a gate leading from the farm-yard to a mill-pond, she seized me to carry me off, when my screaming suggested to her to throw my hat down at the edge of the water, in order to give any person who might have been induced to seek me

from my crying, an idea of my having been drowned, which would, she imagined, mislead the search after me, and permit her to escape undetected."

Before Wilmot had concluded the last sentence of his story, Erina, who had gazed on him with unaccountable interest, and listened to him with inexplicable sensations, threw herself into his arms, exclaiming, "you are my brother—the long-lost Fitz-Henry!"

Wilmot, equally surprised and delighted as Erina, returned her embrace, declared he had, from the moment of their first interview at the Cape of Good Hope, loved her with fraternal regard; adding, "I then believed, my attachment originated in our being of the same nation; on learning you were the sister of my dearest friend Charles O'Brien, I attributed my affection for you to the force of my friendship for him, added to your own claims on my regard; but I now am led to believe in the power of natural sympathy to kindred. Were I, on this subject, to trust to my feelings, I should be indeed persuaded I were your brother and O'Brien's. But tell me, dearest girl, your reasons for believing me thus related to you; for I am all impatience to know the grounds on which I can found my hopes to such an honour and felicity."

Erina then relating accurately the account of Fitz-Henry's loss, which she had frequently heard narrated in the most circumstantial manner, convinced all parties, that he was really found in the young Highland officer; who, after the first transport of feeling himself identified as a man of birth, and the brother of his first friend and the charming Erina, thus addressed her: "As a sequel to my story, I must add, what appears to me a corroborating proof of my pretensions to the names of Fitz-Henry and O'Brien, which I shall glory in bearing. The circumstances are in themselves trivial, but afford me an assurance I am indeed your brother. I was informed, that the clothes I wore, when taken into Lord Herbert's family, were of the finest Irish linen, and marked with the letters F. O. B.; and I was told, that on seeing the present lord one day in regimentals, I ran up to embrace him in an ecstasy, calling him "papa;" which induced him to notice and caress me, when my affection so affected him as to endear me to him, and make him press his father to educate me for the army; and to this nobly generous friend, I owe the events, I must ever consider most fortunate, since they have introduced me to the knowledge of my descent, and afford me the consolation of learning, that I have had the pleasure of being personally acquainted with the virtues of my

father, of knowing he regarded me as a son; that him whom I loved with filial affection was indeed my parent; and that in tranquillizing his last moments, I performed the duty of a child."

Tears flowed from Erina's eyes at this affecting recollection; and the young soldier was softened with the remembrance, to mingle his tears with those his sister shed, to the memory of their father.

The history of that event was known to every one present, as a part of the adventures of Erina's family, united with that of Lord Herbert's; and every eye that witnessed this affecting scene of the brother and sister weeping to the remembrance of their father, amidst the transports of a surprising mutual discovery, gave a tear of sympathetic joy, and soft sadness to the touching event.

Amongst the congratulations on this occasion, none were more warm than those of de Briançon; whose state of suffering was the only alloy to the delight of the scene. He endeavoured, however, to cheer the grief it inspired, by assuring his friends the pains he had endured were diminished; and that he had always wished to end his life in his professional duty. " A soldier's death-bed," said he gayly, " should be the field of battle. I have

had the honour of falling on the post, that gratifies my military ambition. I have fallen at the head of a regiment, which gloriously withstood the bravest enemies it could ever encounter, those are the Britons. I have, in addition to that glory, the happiness of living to take a farewel of those I most regard. Permit me, Rosaline, to have the greatest felicity this world can yet afford me; permit me to present your hand to a youth, who adores you with that enthusiasm requisite to your happiness. I shall then die in perfect peace."

Rosaline, bathed in tears, and covered with blushes, arising from various strong emotions of exquisite sensibility, pressed the hand of her cousin in silence; whilst Fitz-Henry thus addressed her: "Although now apprized, that my birth and connections afford me some right to offer you the homage of a heart, whose feelings do justice to the perfections which inspire my passion, I yet am sensible, how superior the pretensions of Lady Kinross are to those of a young man, situated as I am. In the first place," said Fitz-Henry, colouring and bowing to the prince, "I am a prisoner; and secondly, the sword, which an equally generous and illustrious victor presented to me, and permits me to retain, I am trebly indebted for to friendship; because my first commission was the gift of Lord

Herbert's kindness; and my present rank, I owe to the generosity of my amiable brother. Behold me then, without one possession I can call my own."

Jaffier with a sweet and gracious smile, returned Fitz-Henry's bow, and taking Rosaline's hand, said, "The gallant officer, whom my duty to my country compelled me to retain, so far in captivity, as to put him on his parole, I now resign to your Ladyship's custody. Then turning to Fitz-Henry, the prince said, "Sir, you are no longer my prisoner, but the captive of Lady Kinross. In surrendering you thus to her guardianship, I feel assured, I cannot be doing my country an injury; since I am convinced, I may trust to your honour, and the friendship of Lady Kinross, that your valour will not lift your sword in the present war against the country of a man, who, instead of considering you as an enemy, regards you as a brother."

"Assuredly," cried Fitz-Henry, offering his hand with courteous affection to the prince, "I shall never use the sword and liberty, which I hold as your gift, to your prejudice; for I would not thus disgrace either my birth, my character as a

British soldier, nor the friendship and esteem with which your highness honours me."

"Should my brother's honour want a surety besides his word, which, I am assured the prince's delicacy does not require," said Erina, smiling through tears, "I will bind myself as security for Fitz-Henry's gratitude, by that I owe his highness."

"I accept this hand then, as a pledge for your brother's affection towards me," said Jaffier with courteous gallantry, seizing and pressing to his lips the yielding hand of the blushing Erina, whilst Fitz-Henry thus addressed her:

"We do, indeed, my sister, owe infinite gratitude to the prince, for I am indebted to his highness for more than the sword I wear, and the honourable treatment and liberty his generosity bestows. Learn, Erina, that you owe to this illustrious friend, the life of your newly found brother, as I also owe him the felicity of living to know my origin, and embrace a sister. I cannot, on this occasion, refrain from mentioning, that, surrounded by the enemy, I should have been cut to pieces with my brave fellow soldiers, in defending

ourselves, when stationed on an out-post, had not the prince, like my guardian angel, rushed through his troops to save me from their fury, at the hazard of meeting the fate from which he meant to guard me; for the highlanders, whom I commanded, ignorant of the prince's intentions in our favour, to take us into humane imprisonment, instead of destroying us, pointed their weapons at his breast, resolving to sell their lives as dear as possible, and perish to a man, rather than yield themselves captives to a cruel enemy."

"And I should have fallen, covered with the stabs of a hundred dirks," interrupted the prince, addressing Erina, "had not your brother's voice checked their strokes, whilst he singly encountered me."

"I instantly perceived by your mien," cried Fitz-Henry, "that you were too noble an enemy to fall by cruel massacre."

"You were equally recognized as an honourable opponent," resumed Jaffier, colouring with delicately generous spirit. "Yes! you infinitely overvalue" he continued, "the service I endeavoured to render you; for all that you consider as my gift and free kindness, you are really indebted

to your sister, since it was from her history and description of you, that I became acquainted with your virtues and your person, and learned to regard you as the truest friend of my uncle Lord Herbert.

Seeing you resolved to fall in your post, and recognizing you by Erina's description, I could not withstand the impulse of saving a life so valuable. To spare it therefore, and save the useless effusion of blood, which is the duty of a commander, I acted as I did."

"You acted as a hero!" exclaimed Fitz-Henry with energy, grasping the hand of Jaffier, "you darted towards me, and parrying a thrust of my sword, which broke whilst I pointed it at your breast, you presented your weapon to me, adjuring me to stop all further contest, which could end only in the carnage of my brave fellows. I felt then, that situated as I was, even a Briton might surrender himself without shame, or danger of disgrace, to such a noble opponent, and I therefore submitted to the fortune of war; for I could not with honour any longer resist you, nor use the sword, I held as your gift, against the superior numbers you commanded, without equal rashness and baseness."

" In that," said the prince, " you judged with the spirit of a Briton, who, noble as he is brave, unites on all occasions the utmost intrepidity with honour and humanity; and combines valour in battle with that cool judgment, that enables him to acquire equal glory in yielding, when circumstances command, as in seizing victory, when opportunity renders it possible for him to triumph. In surrendering to me you acted nobly; for you saved the lives of those entrusted to your care, to assert again the fame of Britain; from the bright example of whose warlike sons I learned to lessen the horrors of battle, by the gentle virtues of humanity and courtesies of polished life.

" In this state sanguinary barbarism shall not disgrace victory, but conquest shall ever triumph, as in England, with justice and generosity."

The hearts of all present glowed with admiration and affection for the young soldier and the prince; and every eye glistened with a tear.

De Briançon himself was agitated. He seized and united the hands of Rosaline and Wilmot, saying, " I give you both the best gift I can bestow on each: May you long experience, in this union, the bliss which I sincerely pray may await you!"

The viscount now feeling his end drawing near, sent for his attendants, and performed the last acts of devotion his religion prescribed for dying persons; and calmly waited the moment of dissolution.

The prince requested his mother to take Rosaline and Erina from the afflicting scene. De Briançon joined in wishing them to depart, and bid them each tenderly adieu. As Rosaline's tears fell on him in her weeping farewel, he said, "I expire happy, surrounded by friendship, and embalmed by the tears of a near and affectionate relation."

As his mournful cousin was led from his couch by the sorrowing princess and Erina, Jaffier said, to cheer him, "You expire also in the arms of martial glory; and the trophies of valour, which military honour shall consecrate to your memory, both in your native land and the country where you fall, shall, whilst those who regard you live, receive the constant tribute of regretful sighs, and perpetuate the virtues and the fame of de Briançon to our posterity's gratitude and affection."

Whilst the prince thus spoke, the highest gratification to the spirit of the dying soldier, he smiled

serenely at the anticipation of that military celebrity which had been the ambition and pursuit of his life, and expired, without a sigh, in the supporting arms of his illustrious friend, and Fitz-Henry.

The obsequies of the viscount were performed with every possible military honour, which the munificence of the prince concurred, with the French regiments that attended de Briançon to the grave, to render superlatively grand.

Rosaline mourned her cousin as his sister; and Erina wept his loss as she would a brother's, in grateful memory of his fraternal attentions to her.

The prince, who loved to pay reverence to merit, whose soul was ever animated by the highest enthusiasm in every delicate sentiment and noble feeling, and whose generosity delighted in munificently encouraging all that adds estimation to life, embellishes the world, and in various ways proves useful to society, offered a high premium to sculptors in several places to produce a design for a superb monument, commemorative of his friendship for de Briançon, and his fame as a soldier; for Jaffier thought that *every heart owes a*

tribute of gratitude to those who fall in the service of their country; and when a hero's funereal urn rises to the view of posterity, the marble consecrated to his memory perpetuates the valour that animated his dust: and from it embalmed with tears, future heroes spring in endless succession to eternize their country's fame.

CHAP. XI.

"In the chain of occurrences, happening to every individual, a pious mind may plainly perceive the interference of Heaven bringing the supremest good out of circumstances apparently most unlucky. From which observation, we should learn to submit to temporary evil, not only with resignation, but a religious and firm dependance that every event, however unfortunate it may appear to us, is, in reality, a blessing as a sure ultimate advantage."

WHEN the last sad duties to the remains of the viscount had been paid, the prince, with all the ardour of friendship, pressed the suit of the passionately enamoured, yet timid Fitz-Henry; whose high spirit deterred him from offering, at the shrine of enthusiastic love, a hand which had not the power of presenting fortune with the gift of a devoted heart. His illustrious friend used almost in vain the full force of most persuasive eloquence, in combating the pride of a youth who appeared resolved to die for love, rather than sue for the

hand of the woman he idolized, because she was rich, and he was not so. The virgin widow, on her part, retaining all her maiden modesty, felt it indecorous to make the smallest advance that could be considered inconsistent with female delicacy, and, in conformity with it, determined to die for, or with her lover, rather than encourage him by more than the discovery of her perfect esteem: so that this attachment might have had the most tragical consequences, had not the prince and his mother interfered, to apprise each party that the other would be a victim to their passion, unless the pride of both conceded; on which representation, this extraordinary courtship commenced by the mutual tacit declaration of looks, sighs, and reciprocal attentions, that each lived only for the other.

The prince in the meanwhile, equally empassioned, and delicately enthusiastic, but less timid than Fitz-Henry, solicited him to urge his sister to bestow her hand on him, without desiring him to wait the arrival of letters from her relations in Europe.

Erina's brother could not but approve the duteous considerations which made her delay the gift of her hand; yet when he reflected on the

claims of Jaffier to the warmest affection and gratitude of Erina, and those who regarded her, he felt assured he was authorized to press the prince's suit, with the same earnestness that illustrious friend had interested himself in the addresses he had made in his behalf to Lady Kinross: and Erina, sanctioned and pressed by Fitz-Henry to compleat the felicity of her admirable lover, consented, after earnest solicitations on his part, to resign her hand to him, when the alterations making in the palace, to decorate and furnish the apartments in it destined for her residence, should be finished, in a manner as sumptuous and delightful as princely munificence, and elegant taste, could render them, for an object whom his enthusiastic love considered worthy of all that splendour could give, and the most assiduous attention could contrive for her pleasure.

The edifice, opposite and similar to the quadrangle appropriated to the princess, and which the late usurper had converted into a haram, now destined for the abode of Erina, was, under the prince's inspection, fitting up in a stile of magnificence, that displayed at once the grandeur of his sovereign state, the exquisite refinement of his superior taste, and the delicate enthusiasm of his affection and generosity.

All the beautiful productions and varieties of nature and art, were here concentered in the most admirable combination. The most stupendous works of architecture were displayed in magnificent arcades, colonnades, and suits of sumptuous apartments, with coved cielings, domes, and galleries, supported by tasteful columns and pilastres richly decorated with architectural ornaments; while from superb staircases, light varandos, and extensive terraces, were seen the spacious courts of the palace, and its long ranges of piazzas, with the lofty dome-crowned towers and spiry turrets, which raised their summits in sovereign grandeur over the subjacent city, and the surrounding gardens and country; that stretching from the delights of different near and distinct prospects of stately buildings, rural views of woods, water, and gently rising hills, led the eye to a distance, bounded in some places by plains, gradually melting into a brilliant horizon, and in other spots terminated by chains of mountains, that elevated their variegated precipices to meet the clouds, and veil their tops in mist, or shew their fantastic summits gilt with sun-beams, in a serene sky of brightly illumined azure.

When the beholder's eye was wearied with wandering over this immense tract of variegated

landscape, it could repose delighted still in the verdure of the garden lawns, in its sylvan coverts, on the peaceful surface of its lakes and rivers, sometimes glittering, like gold, to the rays of the sun in all its effulgence; sometimes glistening, like silver, through banks overshadowed by wood; and sometimes, in their meandering course, precipitated in cataracts from rocky heights into vales, to fertilize enamelled meads, or lose their foamy waters in deep glens, overgrown with wild luxuriant vegetation, sprinkled and nourished by ever-flowing streams.

If, in the enchanting view of nature thus diversified, the sight could be fatigued, or the heart of sensibility desire a change, it was offered within the palace; where every apartment displayed the choicest collections of painting, sculpture, and the several arts that, affording splendour to the great, bestow on the industrious part of a community all the comforts of life, in the advantages of commerce, and the circulation of riches.

The prince of Azimabad, ever attentive to the interests of his people, encouraged every manufacture, and every ornamental as well as useful trade. Throughout his extensive palace was seen the greatest variety of curious workmanship, in a

profusion of elegant furniture, after the several modes of ancient and modern times, both in Europe and Asia, with some specimens of Egyptian taste when that country was in its highest grandeur.

Statues, vases, pictures of every description, and every celebrated school and artist of note, adorned the apartments with the most costly mirrors: and each room differing from another in the style of its decorations, was furnished in a peculiar taste of appropriate fashion. The chairs, sophas, divans, and tables, with all the other parts of their furniture, united the utmost elegance with splendour. Ivory, inlaid with gold, ebony, and every other costly and beautiful wood adorned with that precious metal, and all the curious kinds of Japan work, with the rarest marbles, and the richest velvets, satins, damasks, and gold and silver tissues, and embroidered and painted stuffs, gauzes, muslins, and chintzes, exhibited, in almost endless variety, the productions and manufactures of every country. Some of the chambers were carpeted with the skins of the tiger, leopard, panther, and various other creatures famed for the beauty of their fur, which was formed into patterns of taste in compartments. On many of the floors were seen the soft lustrous carpets of silk, originally manufactured in Persia, and now woven

as an article of extensive trade in Azimabad. The fine satin mats of Dacca, surpassed in the delicacy of their texture by the industrious ingenuity of Jaffier's subjects, shone on some of the floors, while several of the apartments, like the colonnades and terraces, intended for habitation in the oppressive heats, were paved with beautiful marble left uncovered.

Such was the palace intended for Erina when she would assume the sovereign dignity, to which she was pressed equally by her friend Rosaline, by the affectionate princess, by Fitz-Henry, and her illustrious and empassioned lover; who, impatiently waiting the time fixed for his union with the maid he idolized, hastened, by daily superintendance, the arrangements, on the completion of which his happiness depended. In the meanwhile Erina and Rosaline were the associates of the princess in her palace, whilst Fitz-Henry was the guest of Jaffier; who, in a continual succession of the most delightful and varied entertainments, proved his love in all the splendid state, gallantry, and enthusiasm of ancient chivalry: for pompous exhibitions, chiefly military, in which he bore a principal part, with hunting matches in chase of the royal tiger, the panther and leopard, or the hyena, in which, seated in a turret on the

majestic elephant, Erina, with the princess and Rosaline, beheld, with mingled surprise and admiration, the superior courage, grace, and dexterity of the prince, excelling in a sport equally daring and useful in the destruction of ferocious beasts, excited at once strong emotions, and exhibited scenes equally grand, novel, and picturesque. Daily, when the business of the durbar was completed, which the princess and her fair companions witnessed from the gallery when any particular affair was transacted, or an extraordinary audience was given, or any foreign ambassador was introduced, the prince repaired to the palace of his mother, to pay the duties of filial affection, to offer the tenderest assiduities of love, to perform the courtesies of friendship, and to enjoy, in the conversation of the princess, the animating presence of Erina, and the most enthusiastic intercourse of sentiment; the first delights of life to a soul of sensibility. On these occasions, walks and rides through the extensive gardens of the palace, or parties on the water, united the charms of nature to those of sentiment, rendering each more refined and exquisite from the aid of the other. At the collations of the princess, and the banquets of the sovereign, where they were daily surrounded by their guests, the company of foreign nobles, the ministers, and the court, festivity en-

livened by music, and social intercourse inspired by wit, and rendered most fascinating by elegance of address, extensive information, and surrounding grandeur, expanded the soul, elevated the ideas, and delighted the heart of every guest, whilst the illustrious entertainers enjoyed, in an exquisite degree, the joy and pleasures their presence afforded. In this august circle Jaffier, like the radiant luminary of day, shone dazzling effulgence, illuminating all around him, and inspiring gaiety as the sun in the firmament. Whether in martial scenes he looked the hero, or in the chase discovered his prowess and agility in manly exercise, or whether in domestic intercourse his intellectual powers displayed themselves as a scholar, a son, a friend, a prince, and lover; or whether arrayed in sovereign pomp upon his throne surrounded by his state, he gave audience, counselled, or harangued his court, Jaffier was ever most exalted and engaging. In his mind and person the man of science, the soldier, the prince, the son, the brother, friend, and lover, appeared superlatively dignified: and, in every character, Erina's enthusiasm believed him more than human.

Much as she was enchanted by the elegance and the enjoyments that surrounded her, her ardent attachment for the prince was entirely independ-

ant of his state, and the possessions he wished to share with her: yet his situation gave a charm to her affection, in rendering him the soul of every pleasure.

Delighted with her condition, blessed in love and friendship, and most happy in the recovery of a brother, whom she had often regretted, and now regarded with the tenderest affection, she had nothing to desire but his felicity in an union with her loved Rosaline, and the presence of her far distant family to sanction her joys, and participate them with her dearest friend Seraphina and Lord and Lady Herbert; whom the princess felt an anxious desire to see, and to whom she had dispatched letters, when Erina wrote an account of her situation to her grandfather.

Their hopes of seeing those dear relations either in India, in compliance with the most pressing invitations to Azimabad, or in Europe, at some future period, on a temporary visit, appeared like the completion of their happiness delayed to a distant season. It cheered their hearts, as the faint rays of the sun in a northern winter revivifies the face of nature when his daily nearer approaching beams promise the coming season of his summer brightness.

Things were in this state at Azimabad, when some time after the treaty of peace between the English presidency in Bengal and the Nabob of Muradpore was signed, hostilities recommenced on the side of the English, on his infringing the conditions he had engaged himself to observe. The existing alliance entered into by Jaffier Mahomed, on his accession, with his kinsman, made it necessary for the prince of Azimabad to assist him in a war which he would not have taken any part in, had he not felf himself bound by ties of honour and friendship to support the nabob; which Jaffier therefore resolved to do in opposition to his inclinations, and the tender interests of his heart. Firm to the cause of patriotism and integrity, he had fortitude nobly to withstand the suggestions of partiality to the English, and the more seductively persuasive sentiments of passion, arrived at the acmé of impatience, and the moment of promised fruition. The palace preparing for his intended consort was completed; a chapel for the marriage ceremony, and the establishment of Christian worship in the palace, was superbly finished, and Erina would not have longer delayed to pledge her faith at the holy altar to Jaffier, had he now desired that testimony of her love. But he was too studious of

Erina's happiness and future advantage, to desire the gift of her hand to gratify his passion, when it might sacrifice her to an immediate and most distressful widowhood. He therefore nobly resolved to leave her in her virgin freedom, under the protection of her brother; whose honour bound him not yet to devote to the service of his country the sword generously bestowed by the prince, although emancipated from the captivity even of his parole.

Dreadful forebodings afflicted the soul of Erina when she took leave of her illustrious lover on this second expedition; but she gathered from his spirit and fortitude, sufficient of both to constrain her feelings, and mourn his departure for the camp as the descendant, the sister, and the beloved object of a hero.

In Jaffier's absence, however, she yielded more to her grief; and would have sunk under it, had she not found consolation in mingling her tears with those of the princess and Rosaline, and conversing with Fitz-Henry.

The gentle girl now, as on former occasions, gathered placidity from piety: and daily intelli-

gence from the camp in the neighbouring territory of Muradpore, by turns composed and agitated her, as she heard the various changes of affairs.

The Marquis of Avondale, who had just succeeded to the government of Calcutta, took the field immediately on his arrival in Bengal, with a strong reinforcement to the British troops, and such success, that the Nabob of Muradpore sued for peace, although two detachments of the combined Asiatic army under the command of Jaffier Mahomed, and his brother Mamoud Cawn, had been successful in taking several English forts.

These pacific dispositions on the part of the nabob, alarmed at the military fame of the new British governor-general and commander in chief, permitted the Prince of Azimabad and his brother speedily to return to the capital of that principality: and the illustrious Jaffier, crowned with fresh laurels, once more entered the gates of his palace in safety and triumph, to be hailed by the acclamations of loyalty as victorious wherever he had turned his arms, although the campaign had been gloriously successful to the English.

With mingled emotions Rosaline, Fitz-Henry, and his sister, beheld the arrival of Jaffier; and

in the delight of his presence, forgot the unhappiness his absence had occasioned. The celebration of the sovereign's return, exhibited a scene of grandeur and festivity, that filled all hearts with inexpressible joy; while Erina's bosom seemed to her scarcely able to contain, united to her own delicate transports, the participation of the felicity which the princess, Rosaline, Fitz-Henry, Zelcida, and every being experienced in greeting the illustrious youth, now more than ever devoted to love, and the object of general admiration.

The evening of his return was passed in all the splendour of a numerous court, received in the grand hall, or saloon, after the ceremonious pomp of which a social banquet waited the august circle. At the conclusion of this festivity, the private intercourse of friendship, and the tenderest assiduities of love, closed a night in which all the charms of state and sensibility, united to the delights of nature and art, seemed to have exhausted the whole store of pleasure for the delight of beings equally blessed by fortune, and the tenderest feelings of the soul. During the grand audience of innumerable flattering congratulations, at the enjoyment of the magnificent banquet, and in the succeeding hours of domestic retirement, until the mutually endeared circle parted for repose, music,

alternately of the soft and martial kind, appropriated to the several scenes, awakened the echoes of the brilliantly illuminated palace, and its surrounding gardens; where the notes of harmonious modulations died away on the murmuring waters and the rustling shades, borne on the zephyr's wings, to sport amidst the streams and on each fragrant shrub; whose odours, wafted back on the whispering breeze, encreased the luxury of the moments.

It was on this night that Erina, blushing through tearful smiles of delicate sensibility, promised, at the united solicitations of the princess, Rosaline, Fitz-Henry, and Jaffier, to bestow her hand on him in the succeeding week; and it was also on this night that the timid Fitz-Henry first dared to solicit Lady Kinross to bless him by becoming his, when Jaffier pledged his faith to Erina at the sacred altar:—it was, likewise, on this night, consecrated by the chaste ecstasies of the tenderest emotions, that the prince and Fitz-Henry first dared to press their lips to those of the objects of their love, when, parting for the night in an alcove in the garden, the gentle couples, sanctioned by the presence of the princess, mutually assented, in silence, to the salute that sealed the sacred promise of their nuptials, whilst roses,

myrtles, and orange blossoms, peeping through the gilded lattice of the alcove, shed their perfumes round, and lightly intercepted, with their branches quivering to the scented gale, the silvery moon-beams of the rising crescent glistening in soft radiance on the dew-bespangled flowers.

A tumult of delight kept the lovers wakeful, anticipating future joys in a long perspective of felicity; yet each rose unfatigued by the long watch of a sleepless night; and blooming with the freshest glow of youth mantling on their cheeks from pleasure.

Jaffier at dawn reviewed his troops, with a peculiar grace, under the inspiring eye of the smiling Erina; who, after a collation given by the princess to the various officers of the army and court, and to the foreign nobles and ministers, accompanied the exulting mother, Rosaline, and Zeleida, with Fitz-Henry, to the gallery in the durbar, to enjoy the view of Jaffier mounting his throne on his return from the dangers of an active campaign.

He had not long taken his seat, and returned gracious and eloquent thanks to the congratulatory addresses with which the audience opened, when

Mamoud Cawn denounced, as a culprit for public judgment, a stranger, who had been detected lurking round his haram. On a demand of justice on the criminal, he was brought before the prince for trial. As the prisoner was led into the durbar, there was an air of dignity in his mien, that inspired respect; and a firm composure in his look, which prepossessed the council strongly in his favour. Habited in the Turkish manner, he was introduced as a young Armenian or Greek, who had been endeavouring to obtain admittance into the seraglio of Mamoud, to intrigue with some of the women who graced his haram.

When this charge was exhibited against the young stranger, his indignant glances silently refuted the infuriated complaints of the prosecutor: and when Jaffier called on the youth for his defence, he addressed him in the English language, as the only one in which he could speak in that assembly to be understood, being, as he said, a stranger in Hindostan. Having thus opened his speech, he proceeded to state, that notwithstanding his object was to gain a clandestine admittance into the haram of Mamoud Cawn, that object was neither shameful nor unjust, because his intention was to rescue a victim cruelly obtained, and barbarously enslaved, against the laws of civilized na-

tions, and in opposition to the interests of the princes of that country.

Mamoud, bursting with rage, fulminated abuse against his accuser, telling him he had a right to detain as captives the prisoners he had made in war: to which, with calm dignity, the youth replied, that although the fortune of war put prisoners in his power, yet neither the laws of war, nor those of humanity, nor policy, gave him a right to inflict insults and dishonour on his captives. Then turning to Jaffier, the stranger bowing with graceful dignity, thus addressed him: "I behold in your highness a justice and sublime elevation of soul joined to sensibility, which encourages me to declare candidly, what prudence, under other circumstances, would counsel me to conceal. The prisoner, in question, is an English female of superlative beauty and noble birth; she is daughter of the Marquis of Avondale, Governor-general of Bengal; whom filial tenderness induced to follow her father through all the fatigues of a campaign, and all the perils of a camp. This peerless maid has unfortunately fallen into the hands of the enemy in their storming a fort, evacuated by the English as untenable; and I have resolved to brave all dangers, in endeavouring to rescue by open force, or obtain by secret stratagem a British vir-

gin, inhumanly led into captivity, and shamefully detained, against all precedent, in the haram of a Mahometan voluptuary. I now demand justice; which refused, I shall appeal to my sword, and challenge to single combat, the arm that dares retain in ignominious imprisonment female innocence against all law."

Mamoud, foaming with rage, demanded imperiously the vengeance of instant execution, as a just chastisement on the culprit, capitally convicted by his own confession, and additionally amenable to justice, by a public insult on the persons of the prince, and of the sovereign of Azimabad.

"My brother," said Jaffier, with impressive gravity, "in every tribunal, justice should preside, to weigh truth with equal balance, and judgment should listen with impartial ear, to pronounce correctly in decision. The maid in question, I require you to relinquish, if really in your power, to my guardianship; for I must, and will ever be the protector of innocence, and the assertor of right, in opposition to my nearest interests. I must not league, even with a brother, to insult modesty, but condemn him for injustice, and reprehend him for cruelty, if proved; trusting to his heart for that concession, which will take from me the painful

office of punishing his errors, by his readiness to repair, if substantiated, those faults laid to his charge.

" Should a female captive be found in your possession, my brother, of the high rank the prisoner before us declares, I will not dishonourably take advantage of his candid confession, to detain the lady, or extort terms for her emancipation, that generosity would consider base, though right might urge the claim. Neither were she of the lowest degree, should I countenance inhuman imprisonment, nor sanction insult, but repress it, as a man of sentiment and honour, as a soldier of spirit, as a just sovereign, bound under all those characters to protect innocence, to respect every amiable female, and be the guardian of her virtue and happiness. Therefore the English captive, if found, shall be released instantly, and conducted to the English camp. We war with men alone. Let not then our arms be degraded, nor ourselves marked with disgrace, as barbarians, by our enslaving female prisoners.

" Young man," added the prince, turning towards the stranger with mild dignity, " I value thee as the champion of an injured female; and if I find truth in thy accusation, of a European wo-

man being ravished from her friends, and detained in my brother's haram, I shall bestow on thee freedom, to meet the reward, with which British generosity and gratitude will certainly recompense thee; for I have learned, from their estimation of the fair sex, and their humanity to those, whom misfortune throws into their power, to venerate women, to alleviate the miseries of the unhappy, and to soften the horrors of war, by the honour of valour, and the courtesies of life."

"Thou art a soldier and a prince, indeed, and worthy to meet Britons in the field!" exclaimed the stranger, bowing with graceful salutation and gratitude. Whilst Mamoud, infuriated by disappointment, and trembling with rage, was obliged to submit to a decision, he secretly vowed to revenge.

The prince now commanded his attendants to escort the English lady from his brother's haram to the durbar; and sent immediately a hastily written note, requesting in court the presence of Fitz-Henry, who was in the gallery with the princess and her associates.

The young officer, who from his lofty and latticed station, had seen and heard all that passed in

the asssembly below, without being seen by any one in the court, obeyed the summons to it the moment it was received: and hastened towards the prince, without remarking that the stranger started on beholding him. There was, however, a look and air so impressive in the youth, as to fix the attention of Fitz-Henry on him, whilst he thus addressed Jaffier. "I behold in the British officer now beside your highness, a person, whose imprisonment some time since, on falling into the enemy's hands by gallantly defending an out-post, is now deeply lamented in the English camp. He has a friend, who would ransom him at any price; and I therefore solicit his liberty, on whatever condition your highness names."

"The generosity of a noble victor," cried Fitz-Henry, "has already set me free; and I am under no constraint, except that which a soldier's honour and gratitude for friendship, impose on me."

"The conduct of your illustrious enemy," rejoined the stranger, "encourages me to hope, that he will then permit you to revisit immediately the British camp with the fair captive, as her guardian, since his highness generously purposes to set her at liberty. In the meanwhile, I will put into the power of the prince a hostage in exchange; who,

detached against the forces besieging the fortress of Firzaghur, carried the terror of the British arms amidst those of Asia: that person is myself. Thus saying, he threw open his vestments, and taking off his turban, (which, with the mustaches and beard attached to it, had completely disguised, under the likeness of an Armenian, the form and features of Charles O'Brien) he stood before the astonished assembly, as the British officer, that had most gallantly signalized himself in defending the sally and retreat of the garrison that evacuated Firzaghur. The courageous discovery, and voluntary surrender of himself in exchange for his brother officer, touched every one; and a general exclamation of surprise and interest echoed through the durbar, whilst Fitz-Henry precipitated himself into the extended arms of Charles, and clasping him in a fraternal embrace, ejaculated, "dear, noble, and generous O'Brien, our friendship is cemented by the bonds of brotherhood. In me, thus unexpectedly found, you see Fitz-Henry, miraculously preserved, to greet thee with a brother's affection, and introduce to thee as an associate in that endearing title, the prince of Azimabad, as the preserver, defender, and lover of our Erina."

O'Brien, silenced by emotion and amazement, in mute gesticulation declared the energy of feel-

ings, that nearly overpowered him, alternately throwing himself into Fitz-Henry's arms, and grasping the offered hand of Jaffier, unable as either of the brothers to express, except by the expressive language of strong and graceful action, the acute feelings of an enthusiastic soul.

Erina and her companions, who, from the gallery, witnessed this affecting scene with powerful agitation, suddenly rushed from their lofty post of observation to the durbar; and the lovely sister of the admirable Charles and Fitz-Henry, clasped them united to her bosom, bathing them with tears of ecstatic joy, and the liveliest affection. It was a moment of exquisite rapture, in which the tenderest sympathy increased transport to its sublimest height. The tale of Erina's adventures, which comprehended in that of Rosaline, their discovery of Fitz-Henry, and the relationship of the prince and princess to Lord Herbert's family, was given in as succinct a manner as possible to the delighted Charles, interrupted by the various emotions it excited, and with the agitation of their sudden meeting, whilst tears of ecstasy, enlivened by smiles of joy, and a mutual interchange of embraces, repeatedly checked all utterance for moments, at intervals, in the story. When it had been narrated, at Charles's request, and he was about to begin

the history of the events which had brought him to Azimabad, a bustle in the durbar, announced the arrival of the English lady; on which, Jaffier, with a grace peculiar to himself, withdrew to hand the fair captive into the hall of audience, and introduce her to his mother and her two lovely country-women. This polite attention was suggested to the prince by the delicacy of his feelings, under a persuasion, that such a courtesy was not only due on such an occasion, but requisite to the sensibility of a British female, whose modesty must render the situation in which she was placed, awkward in the extreme. The amiable princess, Rosaline, and Erina, fully sensible of the pain and embarrassment the fair stranger must suffer, waited her appearance in extreme impatience, from an eagerness to alleviate the agitation and sorrows, in which they knew so well to sympathize. In a few moments the prince appeared leading in the fair expected visitor; who instantly rushing into the arms of Rosaline and Erina, was introduced by their exclamations, to the prince and princess, as their relation, the lovely Seraphina.

It was indeed herself—more touchingly beautiful than ever; for the mingled emotions of this meeting, in such extraordinary circumstances, called forth all that exquisite sensibility, which cha-

racterized the countenance of Seraphina as superlatively lovely in expression, as well as in symmetry of feature.

In this interview, most unexpected to all the parties, except Charles, who impatiently waited the introduction of Seraphina, as a most delightful surprise to the circle, a tumult of emotion declared in a confused manner the situation of each heart, now beating in the most harmonious accord of love and felicity. In sentences almost rendered inarticulate by tears flowing from sympathy, and interrupted by reciprocal salutations, animated by the tenderest mutual interest, Seraphina learned that she was no longer a prisoner, enslaved by a cruel and lawless ravisher, but that she was under the protection of a frequently regretted parent, and under the guardianship of a cousin, as pre-eminently virtuous, and heroically gallant, as he was admirable in feature and figure, and illustrious in birth. She learned also, that her father's nobly generous young friend, was no longer a youth dependant on strangers, and of equivocal pretensions to the station he held in society, but that he was the brother of one of her bosom friends, and the accepted lover of the other. Seraphina also rejoiced to learn, that she need no longer reproach herself, as she had hitherto severely done, for che-

rishing an affection towards Charles O'Brien, that had until then made her feel unjust, and even barbarously cruel to his brother: for she had been aware, that her indifference to the youth, to whom she was so much indebted, had driven him an exile, to encounter distress and dangers; and she had felt ashamed, until that moment, of experiencing for Charles sentiments, which his conduct towards her discouraged. In this instant, when honour permitted him to declare unequivocally, the ardent passion he had so long struggled against, and endeavoured to conceal, Seraphina felt for the first time, her duty in perfect agreement with her love: she therefore yielded to it with exquisite delight, assured that her gallant lover had nothing to fear, but, on the contrary, every thing to hope from the generosity of his conduct, and the gratitude of her parents. Not only freed by sentiment, but urged by it, to follow the tender inclinations of their hearts, Charles and Seraphina abandoned theirs to those soft and exquisite transports, which accompany the first declaration and acceptance of an affection, equally legitimate as it is enthusiastic. The felicity of Erina and Jaffier, of Rosaline and Fitz-Henry, added delight to the raptures of Charles and Seraphina; who, at the interrogatory solicitations of their new found friends, hastened to inform them, that Lord Herbert was Governor-general of

Bengal, and commander in chief, under the title of Marquis of Avondale, which he had been created on his appointment to India; and that he had solicited that post, and undertaken the voyage, accompanied by Sir Phelim Fitz-Henry, Mrs. O'Brien, and her son, in quest of those who had now been unexpectedly found. From her brother, Erina learned with transport, that her conduct, instead of displeasing her family, had endeared her to them each more than ever; and that she would soon have the delight of embracing all her loved friends, as her mother and grandsire had followed the governor with his lady and daughter up the country; which the situation of affairs in Bengal had prompted his lordship to do immediately, on his arrival at Calcutta. When Charles had recited thus much of the account, which was eagerly listened to, he seized and saluted the yielding hand of Seraphina, and begged her to proceed with the tale, whilst she tearfully blushing, and sweetly smiling said, "I am aware, my gallant deliverer, for such O'Brien really is, deputes me to conclude this story, that his modesty may avoid his own praises, which I gladly declare."

"The fort of Firzaghur, which, at Lord Avondale's request, Sir Phelim retired to with Mrs. O'Brien, my mother, and myself, that we might

avoid the inconveniences of the camp, and be within reach of my father, was unexpectedly besieged. On intelligence of this, the marquis, who headed the army opposed to the nabob's forces, sent a detachment, under the command of O'Brien, to engage the troops which invested our fort. Within view of our ramparts, he performed prodigies of valour against superior numbers; when the besieged, finding our fortress untenable, on its being threatened with an immediate storm, resolved on hazarding a desperate sally and retreat, under favour of the aid sent to our relief, and to cut our way through the enemies lines, rather than remain to be the victims of a sanguinary assault in our citadel; where a council of war was held, to consider our situation, when it was judged better to evacuate the fort, and fight our way through the enemy, than vainly attempt to defend it any longer, or capitulate on such terms as we might expect, after the obstinate resistance that had been made, and the repeated refusal of surrendering on the conditions offered us.

"It was under the escort of this sally," continued Lady Seraphina, "that Mrs. O'Brien, my mother, and I, under the care of Sir Phelim, hoped to gain the brave opponents of the investing army; which fell on us furiously on all sides. To

do justice to the horrors of our situation, whilst our party, consisting of all the garrison, endeavouring to cut their way through the enemy's entrenchments, would be impossible. Stupified with terror, I saw myself surrounded by carnage, with death in perspective; and at length torn from the bosom of my fainting mother, and from the wild grasp of Mrs. O'Brien, I found myself detained a captive in a Moorish camp, separated from every being I had ever seen, to mourn my friends for ever lost to me. Distracted by the miseries of my situation, notwithstanding I was treated with the utmost respect, I should have fallen into the mania of despondence, had I not relied on the protection of Heaven, and fortified my mind with pious meditations, when I beheld myself not only a prisoner of war amongst the Indians, of whose cruelty I had the utmost dread, but had every reason to believe I should end my life in the most humiliating bondage in a Mahometan seraglio; for although totally ignorant of the language of those around me, I saw indications, that informed me, I was for ever to be imprisoned in an Eastern haram. This horrid suspicion was yesterday, on my arrival here, confirmed to me by a visit from the person into whose power I had fallen. I have to thank him, for endeavouring to tranquillize me, by abstaining from the least per-

sonal insult, whilst he declared himself my master.

" Ruminating in the utmost melancholy on my wretched slavery, I was this morning drowned in tears, when the well-known sounds of O'Brien's flute, to which I had often listened in pensive sadness, now roused me from it to the dawn of hope, that I might again be free. The tones of his instrument breathing the notes that he had sometimes heard me sing, and told me was his favourite air, seemed to my ear the melody of an angel's voice, foretelling the miraculous intervention of Providence for my rescue; and inspired by renovated joy, I sung a response to the tones of the flute, to indicate where I was; and immediately beheld at the lattice, near which I sat, a piece of paper enveloped round the instrument raised, so as to solicit my attention to this mode of conveying written intelligence. Putting my hand to the lattice, I hastily detached the paper from the flute; and, being alone, perused the following lines, marked with a pencil:

" O'Brien has the happiness of acquainting Lady Seraphina Herbert, that her friends are in perfect safety. Having had the good fortune to cover the retreat of the garrison, that evacuated the

fort of Firzaghur, he had the felicity of seeing Lord and Lady Avondale, Mrs. O'Brien, and Sir Phelim, reunited in company in the British camp, were the trophies of glorious victory waved in triumph, whilst the enemy sued for peace. O'Brien forbears to enlarge on the grief occasioned by the captivity of Lady Seraphina, unwilling to add to the affliction her Ladyship must feel on an event, on which he anxiously sought, and gained such information, as has enabled him to trace her to an imprisonment, that he is resolved to release her from, or perish in the attempt."

"This intelligence," continued Seraphina, sweetly smiling through tears of grateful affection on her lover, "buoyed up my spirits, although agitated at the idea, that in the desire and effort of rescuing me, my generously gallant friend risked infinite danger from the vigilance of my jailors, and the hatred of the Mahometans.

"His disguise, apprehension, and discovery, of which I fortunately remained ignorant, until apprized of their happy consequence, in being released from my imprisonment, and conducted to the presence and protection of beloved friends, whom I was most anxious to behold, and affectionate and illustrious relations, whom I rejoice in

having so happily found, need not be recapitulated; but, in the height of my felicity on this occasion, and my gratitude to Providence for a delivery, which appears as miraculous as it seems extraordinary, I cannot avoid drawing a moral conclusion, from the train of surprising incidents, which unite our respective adventures in one story, in the same manner as those incidents have brought us together, and the inference is this, that *in the chain of occurrences, happening to every individual, a pious mind may plainly perceive the interference of Heaven bringing the supremest good out of circumstances apparently most unlucky. From which observation, we should learn to submit to temporary evil not only with resignation, but a religious and firm dependance, that every event, however unfortunate it may appear to us, is in reality a blessing, as a sure ultimate advantage.*"

CHAP. XII.

"The machinations of the wicked cannot succeed in materially injuring those who place their trust in Providence, and steadily pursue the precepts of the gospel; where it is said, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

THE full assembly that witnessed the touching scene just described, sincerely sympathized in the felicity produced by the affecting incidents that so strongly interested the prince and his mother; and every one, except Mamoud, rejoiced at the fortunate termination of an affair that involved the interests of the state, as well as the happiness of its sovereign; for the detention of a person so elevated in rank as the daughter of the Marquis of Avondale, governor of Bengal, especially her confinement in the seraglio of an Asiatic prince, ap-

peared to the inhabitants of Azimabad big with the ruin of their country; as they had no doubt such an unprecedented insult to the English spirit, would have roused it to inflict signal chastisement on the territory of those who had committed such an outrage.

The account of this transaction, which Mamoud wished to conceal from his brother's knowledge, and which bribery, on the part of the perpetrator, and fear of exciting his vengeance by its discovery had, until that morning, kept from the ear of Jaffier, created such an universal and lively interest for the young strangers, and inspired such a detestation of Mamoud throughout the city and palace, that as the august party passed from the durbar to the grand hall in the range of the prince's apartments, they were hailed by salutations and loud acclamations, in which the praise of the English visitors was united with the shouts of applause bestowed on Jaffier; in honour and reverence of whom, his subjects testified for his British relatives and friends the love and deference which was paid to him; and it appeared that their dislike of Mamoud encreased in proportion to the estimation of those he had endeavoured to injure.

With supple artifice he, however, apologized

for his conduct; and thus, by concession, obtained the noble Jaffier's pardon; whilst in kindness to the generous prince, his friends treated Mamoud with civility, until stung with envy, mortified by disappointment, and burning with revenge, which he cunningly concealed, as heretofore, under an exterior of politeness, he retired from the circle, where virtue and felicity, beaming from every eye, inflicted torments on his wicked soul, that panted to brood in secret on vengeance, and plot its execution, in conspiracy against that happiness he envied.

The society of endeared friends, left to the full enjoyment of their bliss, partook some refreshment in a sumptuous banquet; after which they retired from the grandeur of public state to the seclusion of the princess' apartments. Here, surrounded by all the luxuries of Eastern splendour, the charming circle passed the evening hours in an intercourse that all the exquisitely delicate sensations and attentions of friendship and love, refined by sensibility, rendered enchanting.

The evening was fine, and in a brilliantly illumined sky, serene and bright, as the souls of the lovers were calm and joyous, the radiant luminary of day sunk in a horizon of glowing purple, en-

riched with streaks of burnished gold, whilst from the surrounding shades of the garden innumerable sweet songsters of the grove warbled, in delightful harmony, their evening concert, and the mingled perfume of liveliest blooming flowers came on the gale, breathing refreshing odours. Soon as twilight closed in night, myriads of fire-flies, glistening in phosphoric radiance, illumined each leaf in the garden trembling to the breeze, while the azure of the heavens sparkled with effulgently twinkling stars, and every apartment in the palace, lighted with numberless wax tapers in beautiful pendant lustres, that emulated the diamond's blazing refulgence, displayed a splendour on all sides that exhilarated the spirits.

Refreshments of every beverage delicious to the taste, confections of all kinds, with exquisitely flavoured fruits of various sorts, amongst which was the anana, and mangos of several descriptions, in superlative excellence, were handed round in goblets and baskets of solid gold, most elegantly ornamented with rich embossed work.

During this entertainment music breathed in dulcet strains, awakening soft echoes, and inspiring sweetest sensations of joy and every tender affection. In these moments of pleasure and ex-

quisite sensibility of soul, that encreases love, friendship, every delicate and generous feeling, and each elegant enjoyment to the supremest height, the circle of delighted friends conversed on all the topics interesting to their hearts, in that enchanting confidence that unbosoms every thought, and gives sweet sympathy full power to perfect happiness, by participation with souls mutually endeared, and, as it were, to blend them in one essence.

In this evening's intercourse, harmony of sentiments, and similarity of tastes, united in bonds of tenderest affection and highest admiration, the amiable Seraphina and her illustrious relations to each other.

Charles O'Brien also, from the acuteness of his penetration and the enthusiasm of his nature, saw and admired the perfections of the prince; and, considering him, in every point of view, as the most exalted being, rejoiced in the prospect of his beloved sister's union with a character so noble, and whose claims to her enthusiastic love the gratitude of all her relations must acknowledge with joy.

This was an evening of ecstasy to Erina's sensibility. Each moment was marked by transport to the ardent Jaffier; Charles was enraptured by the

prospect of his felicity; Seraphina delighted in receiving the testimonies of her empassioned lover's adoration, and in the liberty of cherishing and demonstrating, without a breach of duty, the tenderness that devoted her heart to the youth who had long possessed it. The enamoured and diffident Fitz-Henry yielded his whole soul to the ecstatic bliss of superlative tenderness, whilst his spirit scarcely regretted that he was not the possessor of a fortune, because his circumstances afforded him full assurance he was loved for himself alone; and his declaration of a passion for Rosaline, at a time when he was entirely ignorant of her rank and wealth, must, he felt, convince her his affection was equally disinterested as her own. The gentle and sentimental Rosaline, remembering every testimony of her lover's devotion to her, when circumstances seemed to have doomed them each to hopeless love, enjoyed enraptured her present bliss with superior transport, because it was unexpected; and, charmed with the perfect conviction of being adored for herself alone, she gloried in the power of bestowing a splendid fortune on a youth, whose passion had been so disinterested, as to avow itself when totally ignorant of her title and riches; whose spirit had evinced itself in withdrawing his suit when her rank and fortune were discovered to him, and who had given the

most convincing proof of love in subduing his pride, and at length yielding his high spirit a sacrifice to tender sentiment. Whilst each of the lovers felt transported with their situation, the princess, exulting in her glorious son's felicity, found herself attached, by the strongest bonds of interest and affection, to each of the happy circle, whose bliss sympathy made her own.

In this delightful night, in which all subjects relative to the company were discussed, most interesting to sensibility, it was proposed and settled, that Lady Seraphina should, on the morrow, be escorted to the English camp by Charles; and to him was committed the care of disclosing all the discoveries that awaited Sir Phelim and Mrs. O'Brien, lest a too sudden surprise should have an unfortunate effect on the amiable baronet and his daughter. In order to spare their delicate health and weak spirits as much as possible, it was judged right that they should be prepared for their interview with Fitz-Henry and Erina; for which reason, those amiable beings relinquished the delight for which both panted eagerly; namely, that of hastening to precipitate themselves into the arms of their parents. Thus considerations of duty, and filial affection, restrained Fitz-Henry and his sister from flying with Charles and Sera-

phina to greet their friends. Considerations of a similar nature likewise, added to other circumstances, prevented the princess and her son from leaving Azimabad on an immediate visit to the English camp; but Jaffier, with a graceful courtesy peculiar to himself, charged O'Brien with the most affectionate and elegant compliments to each of those whom he regarded as his dearest friends, in spite of the political concerns that had engaged them in warfare against each other. "My dear brother soldier," cried the prince, offering his hand with polite and kind grace to Charles, whilst both bowed a courteous salutation to the other, "I constitute you my embassador extraordinary, and minister plenipotentiary, to his excellency the governor-general. Assure his lordship, there is nothing I more desire than to be on terms of amity with him, politically, as well as domestically; that I am anxious to have the honour of a public alliance with him as the representative of the best and greatest of kings; tell the Marquis of Avondale that I venerate his character, that I love him as a parent, that I estimate the amiable and brave Britons as they merit; but that true to the interests of my country, of which my station constitutes me the guardian, I must be so faithful to my trust, as not to permit any private considerations to prejudice the cause that re

ligion, as well as honour, bind me to the charge of.

Should my state require me to keep my sword unsheathed, and duty urge me to sustain the present contest against the English, I must be constrained to take the field as the sovereign of Azimabad, and in that title forget I am the nephew of the British commander:—yet assure the Marquis of Avondale, that, even amidst the devastations of mutual war, our meeting, any where but in the field of battle, shall be an interview of friendship, and the most courteous respect on my part shall be shewn, as a tribute due from me to an Englishman, and my uncle!

Assure Sir Phelim, and Erina's parent, of my filial reverence and affection. Plead for me, as a brother, for my speedy possession of your lovely sister's hand: tell your parents, my dear O'Brien, that the charming maid, at my earnest solicitation, united to those of my mother, who loves Erina with maternal tenderness, had promised ere your introduction to us, to plight her faith to me, and receive mine at the holy altar, under the sanction of Fitz-Henry, in the ensuing week; and tell them, that as a testimony of filial veneration, the highest in my power to give, I promise to restrain my

impatience, and wait her parent's pleasure and convenience to bestow on me the gift of Erina's hand.

Request the marquis and his lady, the baronet, and Mrs. O'Brien, to honour me with their company as soon as possible at my palace, where each of my loved friends shall be taught to forget that they are in a court hostile to the British arms; for sacred security of their persons and liberty, in return for their trust on our faith, and affection, proved by the kindest attentions, shall celebrate a visit consecrated to festivity, harmony, friendship, and love; and the olive branch, entwined with roses, shall bloom around us in circling garlands, as emblems of peace, felicity, and the closest union."

Commissioned thus, Charles and Seraphina departed on the morning appointed for their journey, in a splendid carriage of the prince, and a guard of honour as a security and compliment, demonstrative of the affectionate attentions the illustrious relations of Seraphina had paid her and her gallant deliverer; to whose courage the grateful maid felt and acknowledged herself equally indebted, as to the noble generosity of her cousin the prince, for an emancipation from a captivity

equally humiliating and shocking, and this most honourable and immediate restoration to friends, agonized at the situation into which she had fallen. The full extent of her danger, however, had been concealed from her parents by O'Brien's delicacy; —that sentiment prevented his enlarging, when interrogated anxiously by Seraphina, on the difficulties and perils he had encountered amongst the Mahometans, in tracing and discovering the manner and place of her imprisonment; and his delicacy likewise prevented his making any merit to her parents, of the pains and risks he ran in the endeavour to release and restore the treasure of an only and most deservedly adored child to their bosoms. But the adventures which O'Brien's spirit, and tenderness for parental feelings would have given, without even an inferred encomium on his own deserts on the occasion, were narrated with such animated praises of her lover's valour by Seraphina's sensibility, that the Marquis and Marchioness of Avondale were fully apprised, and perfectly sensible of all their parental affection owed the gallant young soldier; and, of their own accord, bestowed on his bravery the highest reward in their power to give, the only recompense O'Brien desired, namely, the gift of Seraphina's hand; with the promise of accelerating the nuptials, at the earnest entreaty of Charles and his

parents, as soon as circumstances admitted the acceptance of the courteously kind invitation of the prince and his mother to Azimabad.

The marquis and marchioness, with Sir Phelim and Mrs. O'Brien, heard with indescribable delight, their relationship to the princess and the illustrious Jaffier. The noble friends of the baronet and his daughter, sincerely sympathized with the grandsire and the mother on the unexpected and transporting recovery of Fitz-Henry and Erina, equally lost to them for some time past; and all parties experienced extreme impatience for the happy meeting of all endeared friends in the palace of Azimabad; which Charles and Seraphina described as a place of enchantment. The marquis, however, recollecting the duties of his station as Jaffier did, determined, like that admirable youth, not to sacrifice public interest to private considerations; and remembering he was the servant of a king, whose virtues should attach his subjects to his interest, as much as patriotism should bind each Briton's heart to the good of their country, the glorious governor of India, true to the obligations of his station as a soldier and commander of the English forces, resolved not to abandon the camp until the British banners were secure from every insult. The nabob of Muradpore's solicitations

for peace, gave a reasonable hope, that the desirable event of an honourable pacification was not distant; and all parties, cheered by the happy prospect of a speedy general meeting, enjoyed, in the interval, the pleasures of delightful anticipation with the utmost gratitude to Heaven for their blessings, although as yet incompleat, because the whole party were not united in one circle as they hoped soon to be.

The nabob of Muradpore having opened negociations for a treaty with the English, arrived at Azimabad with his son, a youth about nineteen, to greet his kinsman Jaffier, and advise with him on affairs of state, and his arrangements with the government of Calcutta. On this business the nabob made propositions, which the animated patriotism, inflexible integrity, and strict justice of Jaffier, found it impossible to agree in with his kinsman; in consequence of which, offence was taken by the nabob; who, finding Mamoud ready to side in disapprobation of his brother's politics, and in any measure whatever, however iniquitous, against the English, attached him strongly to his interest as a man who might be an useful agent in the designs against the British government in Bengal. The nabob, in the meanwhile, with consummate art, contrived to conceal his intentions

of future hostilities when they would suit his purpose, by carrying on, with apparent friendliness, negociations for a treaty of commerce with the settlements of the English in India; whilst Jaffier felt himself compelled, by honour, to detach himself from an alliance with his kinsman, that was equally opposed to the advantage of Azimabad, as the views of the nabob were repugnant to the noble principles of Jaffier.

Unwilling, however, to make an open rupture with his kinsman, the illustrious youth treated him with all the civility which the bonds of relationship impose on a delicately generous mind. The nabob remained at Azimabad, the better to retain hi sway over Mamoud Cawn; and the latter, taking an advantage of influence and circumstances, that afforded him the long desired opportunity of executing his vengeance against Jaffier, plotted a scheme, of deep-laid conspiracy, to disseminate discontent amongst his subjects, to seduce them from their allegiance, create an abhorrence of the English throughout Azimabad, stir up the populace to rebellion, take advantage of the general tumult in a sudden insurrection, and, assassinating the prince, once more usurp the sceptre; to massacre, in revenge, the princess, and those who were adverse to him; and, betraying the English

into his power by a treacherous invitation to the marquis's family, to repair to Azimabad on pretence of delivering up to him Lady Kinross and Erina, to murder the governor, and, falling by surprise on his suite, to seize all the European females, and retain them in the everlasting bondage of the haram.

Such were the machinations of Mamoud Cawn, and the kinsman of Jaffier; whilst his noble soul, unsuspicious of the dark and horrid conspiracy against him, and those he most ardently and tenderly loved, nurtured in his generous bosom the viper gathering vigour from the warmth that cherished it, to sting securely with deadly venom.

One night, after a banquet given by the prince to his guests, the nabob and his son, the former was taken aside by Mamoud Cawn into a sequestered part of the garden. The air was serene, the rising moon shed her silver radiance on the placid scene of beautiful nature in repose, and soft music breathed dulcet harmony through the tranquil atmosphere, awakening the soul of sensibility to the most delightful sensations. Jaffier's heart felt the highest transports of chaste love, and, seated between his mother and Erina, he seized, united, and pressed the hands of his parent and the maid

he idolized, and imprinting a kiss of rapture on the cheek of the blushing virgin, he talked to her of endless love, eternal fidelity and bliss in perspective to the last, long hour of their lives, whilst Erina pressed her lover's hand to her heart in tacit vows of her everlasting tenderness, faith, and confidence in his.

Fitz-Henry's soul, attuned to the gentlest affection, poured itself in soft whispers into the ear of the smiling, blooming Rosaline; whilst she leaning on his arm, with Zeleida linked in her's, sighed responsive to the tale of his romantic passion; and permitted him to lead her light steps through winding flower-enamelled paths beside a meandering stream whose lucid water in its gurgling dimpled course, reflected the glittering moon-beam brightly tremulous.

The voice of Fitz-Henry, naturally sweet, was modulated by the tenderness of his feelings to the softest tones, which Rosaline answered in gentle whispers, and Zeleida in silence listened to the murmur of the rivulet: when through the peaceful sound of the surrounding shades vibrating through the breezy stillness of the night, voices came to the attentive ears of Fitz-Henry, Rosaline, and Zeleida. Suddenly they stopped to catch the

tones that awakened suspicion to believe there was some strange intruders lurking in secret for some nefarious purpose; but the voices were soon distinguished to be those of the Nabob and Mamoud in earnest conference, in a tone so low as to denote that the utmost privacy was their object.—Instinctively Fitz-Henry and Rosaline were hastening in silence from the dishonour of listening to secret intercourse, although ignorant of the language in which it was spoken, when Zeleida suddenly checking, with a motion of eagerness, the departure of her companions from the spot on which she fixed herself immoveable, and putting her fingers on her lips as a signal of general silence, stood in mute and evidently anxious attention and horror, listening to the purport of a long conversation, in which she heard distinctly, and minutely detailed, the deep conspiracy they had plotted against the prince, and in which the first scene of the bloody tragedy was to commence by the assassination of Jaffier in the dead of the following night.

The gesticulations of Zeleida sufficiently indicated to her attentive observers that some dreadful intelligence was conveyed to her by this secret conference, in which the name of Jaffier repeatedly caught their ear, and boded some horrid news

to their apprehension, whilst their hearts, taking quick alarm from the extraordinary circumstance, palpitated with undefined fears created by mystery's appalling power.

The voices at length retiring through the shady covert, left a hushed stillness round the sequestered spot; and Zeleida breathless with horror, beckoned her companions thence to seek the open lawns, where, without risk of being overheard, she could whisper the shocking intelligence she had just gained, to the ear of friendship.

Words are inadequate to paint the chilling horror communicated to the gentle Fitz-Henry's and Rosaline's hearts by the tale of Zeleida.

The timid Lady Kinross was near fainting—her lover, although petrified with dread at the threatened sanguinary catastrophe of all the loves and hopes, decked at the moment of fruition, in the gayest dress of youthful expectation, collected to fortify his superior soul, that calm presence of mind, that cool reflection, that dauntless courage, which distinguished him as a true British soldier. He tranquillized Zeleida by his calmness, and inspired the gentle Rosaline with fortitude by his intrepidity; and having composed them sufficiently

ently not to create any suspicion in the conspirators that their plot had been overheard, when they might meet again that night in the palace; the trio repaired thither to rejoin the prince, his mother, and Erina, to whom Fitz-Henry purposed to disclose with caution, when they retired as usual for an hour's domestic privacy to the princess's apartments, the dreadful plot which it would require their united counsel, and all the efforts of valour to counteract.

Although on Rosaline's return to the company of the courtly circle at the palace, an extraordinary paleness overspread her countenance, and it was noticed and lamented by solicitous friendship, yet she exerted herself so much to appear composed, and even in spirits, that no cloud of suspicious uneasiness overcast the features of the two conspirators.—The Nabob of Muradpore, was gay and courteous as usual, and when Mamoud returned the affectionately gracious salute of Jaffier, on his withdrawing from the circle of his courtiers, the villain smiled deceit, and the security of his treasonous purposes lurked beneath the smile as a venomous snake, lying coiled in concealment beneath the grass.

The amiable Jaffier, equally duteous as a son,

attentively assiduous as a lover, and polite as a friend, as he was illustrious in his princely rank, and pious as a Christian, made it an invariable rule to escort his mother, Erina, and Lady Kinross to the palace of the princess, every night when they left his apartments of state.—It was in those of his beloved and tender parent that the prince, relaxing at stated hours from the pompous ceremonies of sovereign grandeur, devoted his whole soul to tranquil repose in the charms of social domestic intercourse, the delights of unconstrained sensibility, the calm reflections of the scholar, the man, and pious Christian.—It was in these hours, and in this place, consecrated to the tenderest filial duties, the assiduities of pure and empassioned love, the intercourse of intimate friendship, the meditations of religion, that the admirable Jaffier experienced all the delight of his existence.

In a chamber adjoining that where the princess slept, she sat for about an hour each night, previous to her retiring for repose, surrounded by the two pair of lovers and Zeleida, whom she denominated all equally her children, witnessing the transports of chaste affection, and the enthusiasm of admiration and general felicity.—This hour was dedicated to pious conversation and serious reading, and was closed by Erina's performance of

sacred music on her harp, which the whole party accompanied in harmonious strains of sublime hymns as a nightly thanksgiving due for the blessings of their lives, and the divine protection that had led them in safety through the day to its close.

On this night Fitz-Henry took the prince aside whilst Erina was tuning her instrument for the accustomed pious tribute of praise, and divulged the horrid business that had for some time pressed on his soul, in a weight encreased by the concealment of the threatened dread events towards the accomplishment of which time was hastening in its unremitted movement. The prince, although shocked beyond description at the direful account, bore it as Fitz-Henry expected.

When Erina's harp was tuned, she struck the chords of sacred harmony, and Jaffier's soul, though oppressed with grief worse than the sadness of foreboding an instant common death, vibrated to the sounds of pious melody struck by Erina's hands, and breathing in the clear, sweet, and variedly powerful tones of her commanding voice; and his with its usual impressive tones, rendered superiorly divine by the fervid sensibility of his agitated mind, joined in accord with Erina's

strains in a manner that spiritualized uncommonly the hearts on which their notes sunk in sublimely solemn sensations.

This was an excellent preparation for the intelligence it was necessary to disclose for general counsel and the common safety.

The prince with his usual superior judgment and delicacy of feeling and expression, revealed the conspiracy planned for his destruction, to which the princess and Erina listened with a horror that anticipated its completion, until Jaffier assured them his vigilance might yet avert the dreadful scheme, explaining his intentions, and concerting measures to counteract villainy by intrepidity.

Having in some degree tranquillized the female circle, he thought it necessary to retire as usual to his chamber of repose to avoid giving suspicion of his suspecting any plot, lest the conspirators might take alarm that would make them judge it necessary to accelerate their savage, sanguinary undertaking ere his scheme for opposing it, by public accusation on the morrow, could crush treason in the germ.

As the prince embraced his mother and her

associates to take leave of the endeared circle, there was a touching solemnity in the manner of his recommending them each to Heaven's care, that awakened sensibility to melancholy presentiment, and called forth dreadful apprehension.

Whilst Jaffier pressed his parent in one arm to his breast, and in the other clasped Erina close to his heart, he dropped a tear on the bosom of each beloved object.—The princess remembering she was the mother of a hero, restrained the excess of that grief which to maternal solicitude whispered in distracting thought that on the morrow she might see that hero and only child fall pierced with horrid wounds, and weltering in his blood.—The idea of her own threatened murder seemed as it were a consolatory anticipation, and straining her son to her breast, she blessed him in a calm voice of sorrow composed to resignation to the divine will.

As the warm tear of Jaffier fell on the bosom of Erina, it heaved a convulsive sigh of sad foreboding that would have made her frantic had she not recollected that it was the duty of a Christian to repress despair by pious trust, and to be perfectly submissive to the will of Heaven.

Jaffier, equally a hero and a Christian, was firm as the first, and resigned as the latter—he kissed alternately his weeping mother and Erina, as if each salute were the last with which fate would bless him; and tore himself from their encircling arms to ponder on the means of effecting their safety on the eventful morrow; whilst the objects of his solicitude remained associated to watch through the night, and pray for Jaffier's preservation. Attentive to every sound, the female company marked with sadness the advance of time, alarmed every instant at the measured footfall of the numerous surrounding guards stationed on their post to watch the palace where the conspirators slept beneath the hospitable roof of Jaffier, dreaming of his destruction in the darkness of treason.

It was a night of agonizing thought, attention, and anticipation to Erina. The dawn broke, and she beheld through showers of tears, the majestic luminary of day rise to light the eventful morning of a night appointed for the perpetration of crimes that history must record in characters traced with blood. Erina shuddered as she thought of this, and prostrated herself in humble supplication for preservation.

At an early hour Fitz-Henry came with a message from Jaffier, requesting the princess with her lovely associates, and her women in waiting, would prepare themselves to appear with him at noon in the durbar; at which time he would wait on them to accompany them thither, as upon mature reflection, he felt assured that their presence in the hall of audience would produce a favourable effect on the important affair he purposed to open, and would at the same time be the safest station in which he could place them, as in case of any tumult he should be near them to guard them from danger, or even any unnecessary anxiety or alarm. Supported by the consolatory company of Fitz-Henry, the princess and her train awaited the appointed hour of the prince's appearance with hearts beating in cruelest trepidation. The moment for their going to the durbar at length arrived, and Jaffier came to salute them tenderly, and conduct them to the hall of audience.

Within the precincts of this court the full assembly, convened by the sovereign mandate, were already gathered; and rose with one accord to greet the prince's coming; and amongst the most obsequious salutations were those of his treacherously cruel kinsmen and brother.

With solemn dignity Jaffier returned the compliments of the assembly as he mounted the throne, where, without taking his seat as usual, he thus addressed them:

" I have called you together, my countrymen, to judge a cause of importance to the state: but ere I open to discussion a matter that may occasion tumult, I commit to the care of my courtiers what I hold more precious and dearer to my heart than all my fortune and my sovereign rank—that treasure is my mother, the relict of my lamented father, the maid who has promised to unite her fate to mine, and the numerous train of female beauty and virtue which can never appeal in vain to the protection of men of worth and soldiers."

A confused murmur circulated through the assembly, whilst each member of it drawing their dagger from their girdle, and raising this weapon of defence, and as with one voice exclaimed, " our poniards are ever ready to guard the fair."

The female company acknowledged their gratitude for this offered service by a gracious inclination of their head; and the prince proceeded, unsheathing his scimetar as he spoke.—" A soldier's

honour should be ever held sacred, therefore I consider your promise so !

" My subjects, my friends, I thank ye for this testimony of loyalty, of virtue, and of valour, for the moment will demand its utmost exertion.

" There is foul treason in the state———" Jaffier pausing, threw his glance of penetrating observation round the council, and thus continued—" Yes ! there is a conspiracy lurking beneath the mask of innocence, and black ingratitude sheltered beneath a shew of friendship, to work destruction against kindness, hospitality, and consanguinity.—Let conscious guilt, in the expression of shame, declare itself to public scrutiny, and the public voice condemn those crimes my pity would pardon, but duty, painful duty, bids me consign to justice.

A scowl of malignity, under a veil of confusion, declared the Nabob of Muradpore the head of a conspiracy, and Mamoud Cawn a traitor to the state ; whilst the assembly burst into a general tumult.

Amidst the disorder of this scene the prince from his throne looked around with the intrepidity

of a hero and the dignity of a monarch. In his eyes the courage of a soldier flashed with noble spirit; in his air humanity spoke the benevolence of a saint; and in his stately stature the command of sovereign controul awed the assembly into silence that hung attentive to his looks and motions, and was riveted on his expressions whilst he thus spoke.

" When wronged of my succession to this sovereign seat, I submitted unrepining to remain an exile from my country, rather than trace my return to it by the devastations of civil war which strews the land with the bodies of its inhabitants, and renders it a barren desert for succeeding generations, to mourn over the ruin of towns and cities of late flourishing commerce; but although I forbore to assert my rights, and march to empire through the blood of my fellow citizens and my father's son.—Now seated peaceably on the throne of my ancestors by my deceased parent's last will, and established in my claims by the suffrages of a loyal people, happy, free, and flourishing under my rule, it becomes my duty to unsheath my sword, and summon forces to my standard to guard the government, my country, and my subjects, against those evils of insurrection, disorder, rebellion, and destruction, which firm principles of

humanity and religion deterred me from occasioning in the assertion of my individual rights in opposition to the general good.—Therefore behold my sword unsheathed at the command of duty, and see me ready to enlist under the banner of happiness, justice, and piety, those who are inclined to attach themselves to the standard of liberty and patriotism, and to swear fidelity to loyalty.

"Amongst that band prepared to sacrifice their best blood in their country's service, I am the first—trusting to be supported in so good a cause by the people I have loved from my youth, and desire to bless by my reign."

Thunders of applause and shouts of loyalty echoed through the galleries of the durbar, and rung in repeated peals reverberated from its lofty dome, whilst without the tumult grew to a stunning noise; and amidst the confused bustle of an encreasing crowd was heard the sounds of trumpets, drums, and carriages approaching the entrance of the palace at the great gateway underneath the hall of audience.

The prince stood unmoved amidst this growing confusion.—The princess and her companions

gazed fearfully around, expecting the gathering populace to break in an unruly multitude into the durbar, and commence the threatened sanguinary tragedy, without waiting for the shades of midnight to veil their deeds of bloody horror and wanton atrocities.

Erina clasped her hands, and uttering a pious exclamation, waited in breathless consternation the scene of massacre her imagination had painted in the most terrific colours.—Fitz-Henry, who had tenderly endeavoured to tranquillize the timid Rosaline, and had succeeded in composing her agitated spirits, committed the treasure of his heart to his sister's care, and obeyed the impulse of his soul in darting through the crowd around him to learn the cause of the immense concourse of people who had burst their way through the gateway, and surrounded the durbar.—Rosaline, trembling with affright, would have detained him from this undertaking, but with the spirit of a British soldier who rushes with cool intrepidity into the midst of every danger when honour urges, and when duty commands, he broke from the tremulous hold of the gentle Rosaline, whilst she almost fainting in the supporting embrace of Erina's arms, believed with the weeping girl that they

had seen Fitz-Henry depart never to behold him more.

Meanwhile the tumult without, and the bustle within the durbar, encreased, and the clattering of prancing horses was heard on all sides below; when suddenly at the grand entrance of the hall appeared the Marquis of Avondale, Sir Phelim, and Charles O'Brien, surrounded by a numerous train of British officers, and Asiatic attendants, in a pompous procession, advancing to the sound of martial music.

The governor and all his suite took off their hats and bowed to the prince, who from his throne made the most gracious obeisance by saluting them in the Eastern manner with one hand raised to his turban and inclining his body forward in a graceful bend, whilst he laid aside his unsheathed scimetar on his chair of state—then with majestic mien he descended from his elevated station, and advanced with a stately step towards the approaching visitors; whom he again saluted by laying his hands across his breast, and bowing whilst O'Brien pointing elegantly to the marquis and the baronet, introduced them respectively to the prince as the governor, and Sir Phelim. Jaffier

then with courteous dignity embraced his uncle the marquis, and the grandsire of those whom he so tenderly regarded, with the politest demonstrations of filial affection.—There was in the air, looks, and gestures of the prince, an elevation and sensibility of soul that charmed his noble visitors, whilst he made them the most courteous compliments, saying, " My heart bids you a sincere and joyous welcome, for I am in want of friends such as the noble and generous Britons ever prove to those who need their aid in the maintenance of their rights; for the swords of British soldiers are ever ready and effectual in support of law, loyalty, and religion, against injustice, rebellion, and impiety.

" You behold me, my friends, marked by treason for instant destruction, and you yourselves destined by conspiracy to be the unhappy victims of treachery and sanguinary cruelty.—In the field our armies have opposed each other; but a common interest unites us now in a common cause as friends and allies.—Although united by near relationship, patriotism and political duty might have obliged us to mutual public enmity, whilst our hearts were reciprocally bound in ties of closest amity to private friendship—that patriotism and political duty now oblige us to public alliance as

to domestic union and affection, and imperiously commands us to join in guarding our respective states, and watch assiduously over each other's personal safety whilst assassination whets weapons for our murder and gives the signal for insurrection to wash our streets with blood, and strew our territories with carnage and the ashes of conflagration, for the present generation to quench the flames of burning towns and villages, set on fire by the torch of internal discord, with their tears—and, perishing in the ruin of their country, leave to posterity the melancholy prospect of devastation, occasioned by civil war, and to mourn in all the wretchedness of poverty and weakness the reign of a cruel usurper's lawless descendants seated on the throne of murdered sovereigns; whilst destruction by invasion, at length marches over the land in greater horror, to punish tyranny, impose a foreign yoke, and crush the last remains of liberty and independence by the iron rod of conquest, and chains of perpetual slavery."

Whilst Jaffier spoke, the hero's spirit, the sovereign's dignity, the philanthropist's benevolence, and the Christian's virtue, beamed in his glances, spoke in his mien, smiled in his countenance, and irradiated his features, and his whole figure with

an indescribable charm that declared him the first of men.

The marquis, Sir Phelim, and O'Brien gazed on him with admiration, affection, and that pleasing sensation of pride which glories in what is admirable under an idea we derive consequence from a connection with it. With such a sentiment, the most allowable as the most elevating modification of self-love, the Marquis of Avondale kindly seizing the offered hand of his illustrious nephew, thus addressed him.

" To form that political alliance for the mutual safety of our respective territories, and to cement that public union of interest by our private friendship, behold me here.—Treachery, ever false, even to itself, has unintentionally betrayed the conspiracy against the British arms, and the treason against your life, and in consequence of this discovery, originally made by O'Brien in his journey through your principality to the English camp, and diligently enquired into by my authority, in consequence of his information, I have hastened hither to apprize you of the danger in which your highness stands, by the machinations of your kinsman and your brother, and to shield you from the threatened blow of assassination, whilst I guard

the banners of England from premeditated insult."

"I grieve," cried the prince, "to think that my kinsman and my brother should be guilty of offences so heinous."—Jaffier covering his face with one hand, leaned his other on the shoulder of O'Brien in an attitude of agonizing distress; whilst through the crowd Erina rushed forward to embrace her grandsire; when just as she reached the spot where he stood, amidst the group that had gathered round the prince, she beheld Mamoud raise his hand, armed with his dagger, to pierce the heart of his brother, on whose bosom the shrieking maid, fainting, fell, to shield him from the vengeful stroke, at the instant when Ibrahim stabbed the villain with a fatal blow, and laid him prostrate, in a merited death, at the feet of Jaffier.

The bustle occasioned by this event seemed to offer conspiracy a favourable opportunity to effect the meditated treason; and the nabob of Muradpore, mad with vengeance against the marquis, and enfuriated by disappointment and discovery, believed his only chance of safety would be in the perpetration of desperate deeds, that might yet effect an insurrection, and certainly avenge himself by the ruin of those he now hated; and thus satisfy him even in his own destruction; for he

preferred to die in a contest for triumph, rather than live to see those he now abhorred triumph over him.

Thus reasoning, and resolved on an attempt suggested by desperation, he drew his scimetar to plunge it into the marquis, when O'Brien parried the stroke; and the frantic nabob, reduced to despair by the abortion of his plans, and the dread of their consequences, fell by his own sword to avoid the ignominy he anticipated.

In his death, and that of Mamoud Cawn, treason expired; and the blood of the conspirators washed all displeasure from the soul of Jaffier; who, covering his face with his mantle, not to behold his murdered brother, wept his end with bitter lamentations, exclaiming, "Why, Mamoud, didst thou rush on that ruin from which I would have saved thee!"

Whilst he thus mourned the fall of his deadly foe, his courtiers endeavoured to tranquillize the grief of the saint-like prince. His mother, and Rosaline, with Erina, her grandsire, and O'Brien, by turns addressed the illustrious mourner in consolatory language, to which he replied, for some moments, in mute but expressive gesticulations

of affectionate gratitude; and at length pressing the united hands of the princess and Erina to his throbbing bosom, he exclaimed, "the reverence I bear an indulgent father's memory, makes me shed tears over the death of his son, who, besides myself, is the only offspring he has left. Yes! filial and fraternal duty bid me also lament, that Mamoud's conduct has, from boyhood, made me feel I had no brother!"

"Mighty prince," exclaimed an Asiatic of common rank, throwing himself at Jaffier's feet in a posture of humiliation and deprecation,—"Mamoud was not thy brother: he was my son. Let this assurance soothe at once thy grief, and plead for me when I make a confession of guilt thou hast a right to punish in a manner most exemplary and condign."

The prince, uncovering his face, gazed an instant, through tears, in silent astonishment on the prostrate suppliant; whom at length raising from the humble attitude of fear, he thus addressed:—

"I promise thee pardon for any crime against myself, on thy free, full, and true confession of thy guilt; therefore proceed, and expiate thy sin towards me, by easing the agony of my soul, in

so long a persuasion that I have been scandalized by a relationship with him, whom thou assurest me is not my brother."

" Know, illustrious prince, then," resumed the self-convicted culprit, " before thy father married the princess thy mother, there was a female who aspired at the sovereign empire over his heart, by the gratification of his earnest wish in presenting him a son.

" When he departed for Goa, where he united himself to the fair object of his future constant love, the Asiatic favourite of his haram, announced herself to Abdallah in a state soon to become a mother. As she had several times before deceived him with a similar tale, he discredited her account, and departed for the place where the purest passion he ever experienced possessed his soul, and attached it for ever to the European beauty, whom he soon prevailed on to become his consort.

" Blessed in her, he returned to his palace; and, in conformity to the vows of his marriage with the lovely princess, he devoted himself most faithfully to her; and immediately discarding all the females from his seraglio without seeing them,

he desired the woman who had declared herself pregnant, might be attended with particular care, to ascertain her situation, and preserve, as his offspring, any child which should be born as such.

" The female, who was equally artful, unprincipled, and ambitious, believed she might, by artifice, allure him to desert the princess, and retain her as a favourite, under the persuasion she was the mother of a child she would declare to be his. According to the plan of deception, she had resolved to adopt, and which her exclusion from his presence rendered practicable, she persisted in maintaining her pregnancy; and, having bribed an attendant, who was my wife, to aid her in the execution of her nefarious scheme, the child born to me was pretended to be Abdallah's son, by his late favourite, who feigned herself always the mother of Mamoud, as the prince acknowledged him.

" Although she failed in being reinstated in the situation she expected, yet she maintained the deception with the utmost care, to shelter herself from punishment; and the mother of Mamoud, with me, were, for the same reasons, so faithful to the secret, that, until this moment, it has never been divulged; nor would now have been declared, had

I not preferred throwing myself and my wife on your mercy, rather than purchase our safety at the expense of your highness' peace."

"A crime repented and acknowledged," replied the prince, with gracious kindness, "meets the pardon of Heaven, and must obtain mine.

"Depart in the peace thou hast afforded me; and live in the security and happiness thy confession has bestowed on me. The improbability of thy criminating thyself by a falsehood, vouches for the truth of thy assertions. Thy wife shall be examined, and if her tale corroborate thine, and poverty has degraded thee to consent to guilt, it shall be my care to prevent want corrupting thee to future villainy."

"Prince," resumed the pardoned criminal, "the woman yet lives, who, against her own interest, will be prevailed on to vouch my story true; for ambition made the late favourite of Abdallah gain a filial respect from Mamoud, by threatening to disclose his real parentage, unless he treated her as his mother; which he was loth to do from boyhood; and would have refused, had he not been held in check by self-love and interest. He has, however, left us, his real parents, in

misery, secured of our silence by our low degree, added to our dread of his power to destroy us, and the natural affection which, in spite of his undutiful behaviour, we could not divest ourselves of feeling for him."

The prince having commanded a strict scrutiny to be made in this affair, for his future examination, and being tranquillized in the meanwhile by a conviction that Mamoud was not his brother, led his noble visitors from the scene of bloodshed they had witnessed.

The party, on their way from the durbar to the palace, congratulated Jaffier on the happy termination of an affair that had a short time before such a dreadful aspect. Instead of discontent against the English, they were hailed as the preservers of the prince and state of Azimabad; and instead of insurrection and rebellion, peaceful joy and loyalty pervading all degrees, and glowing in every bosom throughout the city and palace, made both a scene of festivity; whilst loud acclamations in praise of the Britons and the prince resounded on all sides as they passed to the great hall of state in the palace.

Here the marchioness, Lady Seraphina, and

Mrs. O'Brien, enraptured by their reunion with Fitz-Henry, who had met and conducted them thither on their arrival, rushed to the embraces of Erina, Rosaline, the prince, and princess. Sir Phelim pressed his new-found grandson to his aged bosom, with feelings proportioned to the blessing of finding his long lost Fitz-Henry in the long-esteemed, accomplished, and admirable Wilmot. Lady Kinross, authorized by her engagement to that amiable youth, embraced his parents with filial affection, and was pressed to the bosom of Mrs. O'Brien and the baronet as a daughter, endeared trebly in that character as the protector of Erina, and the future wife of Fitz-Henry, added to her claims on the score of her loveliness.

The marquis embraced that noble young friend with sentiments, that acknowledged all his obligations to the generous youth.

"Fitz-Henry," said his lordship warmly, squeezing his hand, "you are still my son, though you have found your parents. Yes! my dear fellow, I must always love you with paternal regard; and insist on considering you as my child in the settlement of my fortune."

"Certainly!" cried Lady Seraphina, blushing,

and offering a hand to the bowing Fitz-Henry, whilst she gave the other to O'Brien's solicitation; "the brother of Charles must be mine also. He is generous as you are disinterested; has loved me for myself by his own declaration, from the first moment he saw me, when he would have wooed me, portionless as I then was."

O'Brien kissed the yielding and soft hand of Seraphina, to seal the truth of what he had often vowed, and to confirm what she now said for him.

The prince, in the meanwhile, had received the hand of Erina from her mother and grandsire, as the best acknowledgement in their power to offer the illustrious youth, for his preservation of their idolized child, and his devotion to her.

The princess and marchioness, who had flown into each others arms, now embraced each others children in an excess of joy too great for utterance. Transport and congratulations, mingled with the kindest compliments, circulated through the august and joyous circle; who in the rapture of this meeting, were not so absorbed with their own gratification, as to be unmindful of the happiness of those who were delighted by the participation

of the felicities showered on the illustrious and noble families now united in one, by bonds of innumerable reciprocal obligations, and ties of enthusiastic friendship, drawn close and indissolubly cemented by consanguinity, and the tenderest of all connections.

Zeleida and Ibrahim were introduced to the new visitors as estimable, highly valued friends, and as such most courteously greeted by the marquis, his lady, and Sir Phelim, and Mrs. O'Brien. —Charles and Seraphina having before been the guests of the prince, felt themselves at home in the palace, and pointed out all its magnificence and charms to the admiration of the strangers.

Amongst the joyous hearts on the blissful occasion of this meeting, were those of the honest soldier Patric M'Shane, the respectable Dennis, and faithful Norah.—The veteran, resolved to follow his master all over the world, thought the voyage to India with O'Brien in search of Erina, a mere trifle; Sir Phelim's aged valet thought the undertaking equally easy as his fellow servants M'Shane, and Nora; and the whole trio left dear little Ireland without a regret, assuring their masters and mistress they would be happy in any country in their service.

The delight of these faithfully attached domestics on their meeting with Erina, and their introduction to the restored Fitz-Henry, had all the charms of sensibility and enthusiasm expressed in a manner so simple, energetic, and touching, that it deeply affected all parties, and drew forth amongst the circle, tears of sentiment, glistening through smiles of entertainment, at their mode of greeting on this happy day.

Having already been acquainted with all the adventures of Erina and Fitz-Henry, M'Shane, Dennis, and Norah, flew forward to return the affectionate salutation of their young master and mistress crying out with one accord, "Is it indeed you yourselves, my dear jewels, that I see? Arrah upon my conscience but I am delighted to see you so soon after our long, long parting!"

"Bless your honour's *swate* face," cried M'Shane, accosting Fitz-Henry with a military salute, "sure I never thought that the two gentlemen Mr. Wilmot and Master Fitz-Henry were both one and the same person, as I see now they are sure enough, for your honour has got the same same *swate* face as your brother's and sister's *swate* faces, though your's is a little different.

"Ogh! and sure enough it is!" ejaculated Norah—"faith I remember your honour's pretty blue eyes, and *swate* mouth, and beautiful hair, just the same as your's is—and then I'm sure, aye *sartin* sure, you must be yourself, *becase* of the pin-before, which your honour used to wear *tied behind*; for it's as true as I stand here, that never thought I should be here in all my life; aye, it's true indeed, that I myself worked with my own proper fingers, the letters of your honour's pretty name upon that same pin-before in black silk, made with your own brown hair, to *kape*, when your honour was grown up for your sake.——"

The first day of this delightful re-union was devoted to the charms of private intercourse, as the flutter of spirits occasioned by the general meeting, and the circumstances attending it, rendered retirement necessary to all parties.

In this day's conversation between the enraptured circle, the respective tale of each person was detailed.—The Princess learned that her father was no more—that her sister had closed his eyes in peace with filial tenderness, notwithstanding his cruel treatment of her, which he had endeavoured to expiate by bequeathing his immense riches to her, and which the marquis now insisted on shar-

ing with the princess, according to her right as joint heiress of the Duke de las Estrellas.—The princess could not submit to this division, assuring her generous brother-in-law, that as she had been doomed by her father to a religious seclusion, the fortune was entirely Violante's right, and a friendly contest on the subject ensued.

The princess was charmed to hear that her beloved aunt Donna Isabella still lived, and that she might yet have the delight of intercourse with this amiable relation, with whom her correspondence had been interrupted by Donna Isabella's departure from Madrid, to a country seclusion distant from the metropolis of Spain, whither she had retired on the melancholy loss of her niece Dorothea, which was the cause of her letters from Portugal never having reached her.

Erina learned that on the receipt of her letter to Sir Phelim previous to her sailing for India, Charles had visited Paris to represent the conduct of the lady abbess, whose cruelty had caused so much misery to Erina and her friends.—On his taxing the superior with the injustice and atrocity by which his unhappy sister had suffered, the abbess endeavoured to excuse herself by shewing the letters of Father Murphy, as some authority for

her conduct, and some extenuation of her behaviour.—Those letters displayed the character of the priest in such colours, that he immediately lost all the influence he had so long retained over Mrs. O'Brien, and in consequence forfeited the situation and power he had taken nefarious means to secure ; and which, honest conduct would have ensured to him as a valuable, honourable and perpetual benefice.

Erina was too generous to rejoice in the humiliation of the man who had been her bitterest persecutor—she was of a disposition so christian as to lament his wickedness, and to write him a letter of pardon, with a benefaction to prevent his being urged by poverty to the commission of new crimes :—her address though kind, was calculated to make him repent his conduct, and to shew him that the bad means, sometimes resorted to as a road to affluence and power, in general defeat their purpose, and bring disgrace and misery.

The guests of Jaffier being now encreased to a large company, he conducted them to the wing of the palace opposite to that of the princess; and shewed them the beautiful ranges of apartments destined for Erina ; requesting her to allot ap-

propriate chambers for the residence of their friends.

Each of the suite of rooms chosen for their private separate accommodation, was an elegant and spacious saloon leading into a sleeping apartment and two adjoining dressing-rooms, and looking into the arcades of the palace court in front, and opening into the varando or long colonade towards the gardens, at the back of the palace.

The chambers destined for the marquis and marchioness, were furnished with ebony, inlaid with burnished gold, with blue velvet curtains, drapery, and cushions for the chairs and sofas, richly embroidered and fringed with gold.—The apartments allotted to their lovely daughter were in the same stile, and adjoining to those of the marquis, with the difference of being furnished with sandal wood ornamented sumptuously with silver highly wrought and polished, and the hangings made of white satin lined with Persian of the most vivid rose tint, with a magnificent border of silver embroidery.—Rosaline's apartments were furnished with rose-wood, brightly polished and scented with the sweet fragrance of the rose.—The dark veins of this beautiful and highly perfumed wood, were set off by a profusion of bur-

nished silver ornaments, and by the lively hue of pink satin, lined with lustrous white sarsnet, fringed with superb silver lace, and a rich fringe of the same.—Erina's chambers were in a superior stile of splendour.—Ivory of the most brilliant polish, inlaid with gold highly burnished and richly wrought in an embossed pattern, composed the bedstead, Grecian sofas, chairs, tables, and cabinets.—The hangings of the bed, the draperies, and covering of the furniture with the cushions, were gold gauze, equally light as it was splendid, richly ornamented with a most tasteful border in foils, glittering in the brightness of jewels in every vivid colour. Sumptuous mirrors set in magnificent frames, encreased the refulgence of the apartments, which opened into each other by folding doors most richly gilded.—On the dressing table was a complete set of toilette decorations, of the finest gold filigree, and round the apartments vases of the same, filled with perfumes and flowers, added the sweetest fragrance to the gaiety and splendour of the scene. The rooms were spread with silk carpets of the finest texture, and beautifully lustrous in glowing colours; while antique statues of snow-white and transparent marble, bearing lamps of crystal, and lustres in every room glittering pendant from a painted ceiling, either rising in a dome, or coved, completed the gran-

deur and elegance of these apartments, where taste, luxury, and magnificence, combined to throw an effect of enchantment around, whether the sight confined itself to admire the internal decorations and riches, or whether the eye extended itself to the view of the palace and its surrounding gardens, with the prospect of the subjacent city and far extended territory of Azimabad.

Near Erina's suite of private apartments, were those of Sir Phelim and Mrs. O'Brien.—In those the duteous girl allotted her grandsire, japan furniture and crimson velvet fringed with gold, gave an air of comfort to the rooms, which she believed adapted to the baronet's time of life and taste.—And she thought the adjoining chambers furnished with satin wood and painted gauze, in which the most beautiful flowers bloomed in unchangeable and liveliest hues, particularly adapted to her mother, who had a particular fancy for flowers, and admired these chambers more than those fitted up in superior splendour.

Having taken up their residence in this palace more retired than that inhabited by the prince, the party sat down to an elegant and private banquet,—and ended this eventful day by thanksgivings for their preservation through its dangers, and their

reunion in the bosom of love, friendship, security, and felicity.

The succeeding morning was commenced by opening the superb chapel, which the prince had fitted up for the establishment of public Christian worship in the palace.—The confessor of the princess, and several Portuguese priests, officiated in a solemn service, which was attended with the utmost reverence, and by all the illustrious family, with hearts overflowing with pious gratitude; whilst the sublime chant of sacred rituals, and divine music, pealing from the organ, and rising in hymns and choral anthems, elevated the soul to soar on devotion's wings, to the celestial throne.

The marquis, Sir Phelim, Charles, and Rosaline, with Fitz-Henry, although they did not profess the catholic worship, joined devoutly with a true christian spirit, in this solemnly impressive religious act; trusting that every faithful suppliant and true believer in the Saviour's atonement, would, through his merits, be admitted to mercy, and that every christian temple might be any christian's place of devotion.

After this solemnity, the prince opened the dur-

bar to transact the daily necessary business of the state.

The gentlemen took their station in the hall of audience; and the princess with her associates and court repaired according to custom, to the gallery.

Every eye was fixed on the prince when he received the public congratulations on his late escape and present happy and firm establishment on the throne of his ancestors.

Sensibility, combined with dignity, shone in his eyes, glancing penetration, and the sublime genius of an elevated soul; grace was in all his actions, magnanimity, united with eloquence, in his speech.

A treaty between the British government in Bengal, and the principality of Azimabad, was now concluded, equally advantageous to both territories, by which the future interests of the English in that part of Asia, were interwoven with those of the state of Azimabad.

The next affair which came into discussion was the establishment of Muradpore.—By the treachery and treason of the late nabob, that princi-

pality was forfeited to Jaffier, who was next heir to that territory, after the demise of the nabob's son Cossim Alli.—His life was endangered by the treasonable practices of his late father: but Jaffier was above availing himself of the power to depose, and even to destroy the son for the guilt of his parent, in which he might not have been an accessary: and when the youth appeared before him in the durbar, intimidated by the sight of his judge, so injured by the late nabob, and oppressed with grief at his humiliating situation, Jaffier thus addressed him:—

"Sitting here to try a cause in which I am at once the plaintiff and the judge, I would invoke justice and mercy to guide my decision with peculiar accuracy, lest prejudice prompt me to cruel severity, or mistaken lenity injure judgment.

"The sovereignty of Muradpore devolving to me by right, at your decease, and your life being forfeited by your father's treason in my state, makes me the legal claimant on your domain.—Justice bids me assert my right to prevent your accession—and law gives me also a power to take your life, or retain you in perpetual imprisonment. But in consideration of your youth, and the trust that you are not concerned in the late horrid and barbarous

conspiracy, I abstain from taking either your forfeited life or liberty.

"Cossim Alli, thou art free!—for mercy pleads thy cause.—That lengthened life and liberty I give, pity tells me I must not render wretched; therefore, my kinsman, I resign to thee the state and possessions of thy father.—Depart, and reign in peace, in humanity, and in virtue!"

The surprised and agitated Cossim prostrated himself at the throne of his illustrious judge, calling him preserver and father, and vowing eternal fealty and affection.

Jaffier softened to tears, raised the prostrate youth, embraced him kindly, and assured the grateful boy whom he had raised most nobly to his sovereignty, that he would be his adviser, friend, and faithfully attached ally, but that he disclaimed all homage from a state hitherto free and independent.

His next care was to concert measures for the immediate accession and firm establishment of Cossim Alli, on the Misnud: and having agreed to guarantee a treaty of peace between the new nabob and the marquis, Jaffier commanded an

honourable escort to conduct his kinsman to Muradpore, to take possession of his territory.

Before he left the durbar, he understood that the people whom he had appointed to interrogate those concerned in the deception of Mamoud's birth had, beyond all possibility of doubt, proved him to be the son of the poor man who had acknowledged him as his offspring.

Public business being now dispatched, Jaffier entertained his noble relation the Marquis of Avondale as his uncle, and the governor-general of India.

The festivities on this occasion were most sumptuous; as a proper testimony of respectful consideration due to his private character, as his parent, and in his public rank, as the supporter of the British name, honour, and fame, in Asia.

The enamoured prince, impatient to complete his happiness, and that of Charles and Fitz-Henry, solicited all parties to name an early day for the nuptials; and by general consent the time was fixed for their celebration, which had already been looked forward to as the moment of supreme

felicity, by appointing the first day in the ensuing week for the three marriages.

In the meanwhile Ibrahim, who had long admired the amiable Zeleida, and wished to turn Christian by the example of his illustrious master, whose life recommended his faith as superlatively good, solicited the prince to bestow on him the hand of the beautiful Asiatic, who, loving Ibrahim for his services, and faithful attachment to Jaffier, permitted him to promise her hand as the reward of those services, and the affection he had evinced towards all the inhabitants of the palace.

Whilst preparations of the most splendid kind were making for the nuptial festivities, the prince, who was ever attentive to every thing that constituted his duty as a man and a christian, amidst his enquiries respecting the treatment and accommodation of every stranger in his city that, as included in the train of the marquis, the noble prince considered his guest, heard that a European female, who was wife to one of the governor's dragoons, was dangerously ill.

Universal benevolence and tender pity, ever the inmates of Jaffier's bosom, presented to him in

the strongest colours, the probable sufferings of this person, distant from her home, and perhaps dying in a foreign country for want of proper assistance.—As he never concealed a thought from Erina, and knew her gentle soul would melt in kindness for a distressed object, and imagined her active compassion might relieve the sufferings of the sick female stranger, he mentioned her situation to the lovely maid:—Ever ready to administer comfort to the afflicted, as to follow, and even seek and anticipate the wishes of her glorious lover, Erina proposed to go in person to the chamber of disease, to learn exactly all that might be required to assuage the distress she pitied.—The princess, the marchioness, Lady Kinross, and Seraphina, feeling with Erina that no elevation of rank or situation should deter any one from the personal performance of any duty enjoined by religion, resolved to accompany the virtuous Erina to the scene of gloom, in order to assist her in administring comfort and relief.

Accordingly they went, accompanied by the prince himself, and the two O'Briens, who all engaged in this undertaking equally from motives of christian benevolence, and an impulse of gallant courtesy to the ladies.

The august party, eager in the office of charity, passed without repugnance from the lofty dome-crowned gilded roof of a sumptuous palace, into a common edifice, where every thing about the sick person announced disgusting malady, joined to the privations of indigence. The patient was lying in a state of stupor, when Erina, like a ministering angel, winged by chastity, flew to investigate the condition of the female, apparently dying; and approaching the bed of illness that might prove infectious, she discovered in the pale, emaciated, and miserable countenance of the soldier's reputed wife, reduced to the state of the lowest degradation, the abandoned woman who had betrayed her from the villa of Rosaline at Chandenagore.

Shocked at the horrid spectacle of infamy in the meanest state, Erina uttered an exclamation of mingled surprise and terror; when the female, roused by the noise, and recalled to her wandering senses by the sudden sight of Erina, screamed in the dreadfullest manner; and starting from her bed, sprung out of the chamber with frantic gestures, into the adjoining room, whither Erina and her female companions followed her, and where they beheld the prince and Charles grasp her in their arms just as she had gained a window, whence she would have precipitated herself from a great

height to the ground, had she not been restrained by the united hold of Jaffier and O'Brien.

Understanding she was in a state of delirium, they gently endeavoured to soothe her violence, and removed her, as soon as possible, to her bed, where she thus addressed Erina :—

" You see before you the woman who plotted, with de l'Armencour to destroy you. You see in me a woman divorced from a man of rank by the infamy of her life, and afterwards married to a second husband, whom she equally abused :—you see in me the most abandoned of her sex, the opprobrium of women, the disgrace of title ;—you see in me a wretch who has seduced innumerable women to infamy, like her own, by vicious advice, and still more dangerous example, of vice triumphant, and even fashionable for a season ;—you see in me the most degraded of creatures, who has debauched the morals of many men, entailed misery and ruin on their families, and who, now sunk into the lowest excesses of every wickedness, is the victim of her crimes, and a warning to mankind to shun vice as a pestilence, and to avoid with vigilance the first step in error, which leads to perdition ! " To conclude," cried the miserable creature, almost exhausted, and sinking back

on her pillow, in a deep groan, "you behold in me the once courted, admired, and fashionable Lady Engleton!"

"Lady Engleton!" repeated the prince and O'Brien in an interrogatory tone—"Is it possible that we behold in you the once seductive and adulated countess of Engleton?"

"Yes!" ejaculated the wretched woman, again starting up in her bed with the exertion of frenzy, and fixing a gaze of maniac despair on Jaffier and O'Brien:—"I may well be forgotten; and you may not recognize me in this wretched situation; but I remember, that you are the only youths who baffled and disappointed my seductive arts."

The expression of the sufferer's countenance was horrid beyond imagination, and the innocent Erina shrunk from the sight before her, whilst the prince, gently seizing, and tenderly pressing the cold and trembling hand of the agitated girl, whispered in her ear, that the transient view of her charms, and her gift of the rose, which, on the night he first beheld her, he had solicited, and obtained, from her captivatingly graceful condescention, had, like a talisman, preserved his heart from seduction, to which he might have yielded in

the season of youthful inexperienc and passion, had not her image, ever present to his fancy, under the chaste beauty of female modesty and virtue, told his enthusiasm to keep himself from meretricious arts; and, above all, to fly the allurements of a married woman.

Erina, enraptured by the declaration of her virtuous lover, acknowledged her admiration, by returning the pressure of his hand, as a token of her affection and confidence in the truth and faith he vowed.

Seraphina also exultingly looked on O'Brien, and made that enthusiastic youth experience the rapturous delight of innocence and virtuous love, of which his energetic and delicate mind had ever presented the most charming image to his fancy.

A similar delight thrilled through the soul of the gentle Fitz-Henry also; and made him feel a transport, in the consciousness, that even his romantic passion for Rosaline, when he believed her the wife of de Briançon, had never seduced his soul to an idea he would have been ashamed of avowing, even to her delicacy.

Whilst the virtuous lovers indulged these trans-

porting reflections, Lady Engleton, gazing wildly round her, cried, "Give me a draught to drown my agonizing thoughts, and banish despair—fever parches me with thirst, and I must, as formerly, intoxicate my senses to silence the scorpion stings of conscience."

Erina shuddered at her words and looks; and whilst the wretched victim of infamy raved in the violent paroxysm of fever and intellect, disordered by a disease occasioned by her intemperance, her visitors solicitously endeavoured to administer to her all that might assuage the miseries of a sinner's death-bed; and trembled to behold a scene that, in the last struggles of expiring nature, and too late awakened conscience, defies description, and displayed, in its full horrors, the fate of infamy.

The recollection of this horrid scene chased, for some time, from the minds of those who witnessed it, the gaiety of innocence; but the peace of virtue recomposed their hearts to anticipate their approaching felicity, and the elastic spirits of youth again decked their faces in smiles of love.

Meanwhile the nuptial day approached, and joy beamed in every eye, sometimes in dimpling

smiles shining through tears of exquisite sensibility. In daily and hourly acknowledgments of mutual gratitude for eternal obligations, the name of the departed Viscount de Briançon received the tribute of general praise and affection; and in order to introduce his character to the Marquis and Marchioness of Avondale, Sir Phelim, Mrs. O'Brien, Charles, and Seraphina, who had never seen the lively Viscount, Rosaline produced the following letter as a picture of her gay cousin's mind and manners:

"I cannot bear, my pretty cousin, to behold you melancholy on the subject of your charming friend in the convent; and I have reflected as deeply as my volatile disposition will permit, on the means of extricating you and your friend from the difficulties of your situation; on which subject behold the scheme which has come into my head.

"You tell me you are resolved never to marry; you have rejected me, in spite of which I am going to make you another proposal—don't start, nor be angry; but attend to me whilst I assure you, that you are too charming to be unsolicited to change your mind and situation, unless you keep both by accepting my proposal.

"You will probably think me mad or joking, but I assure you, I never was more serious, than when I offer you my hand, not as a husband but a brother, friend, and constant future protector and companion: this can only be effected in decorum by your entering into a nominal marriage with me, which, if you agree to, I promise, on the honour of a gentleman, to leave you perfectly mistress of yourself and fortune.

"As I am under orders to embark for India, your accompanying me thither will afford you an excellent opportunity of rescuing your friend, and making her the companion of your voyage to a country, where she will be removed from the danger of the persecution she now suffers. Should you and your friend agree to this proposal, you may command my services; and permit me to assure you, my charming cousin, that I shall ever remain,

"Your devoted and obedient cousin,

"AUGUSTE DE BRIANÇON."

Rosaline remembered her cousin with grateful affection, for the honourable fulfilment of his promises; and Erina, with her friends, considered themselves for ever bound to Lady Kinross, for the noble part she had acted in Erina's preserva-

tion from perpetual imprisonment and separation from her family. No one felt so highly indebted for this service to Erina as her lover; on the score of his obligations to the fair Rosaline and the two O'Briens, who had saved him and Azimabad by the discovery of the recent conspiracy, the prince had, according to the custom of eastern potentates, made the handsomest presents to the brothers, and to all his guests, on his approaching nuptials.

Sir Phelim, one day taking Fitz-Henry by the hand, assured him he should consider him his heir according to Charles's entreaty; in consequence of which the estate of Glenrock was settled on him, whilst Fitz-Henry, unable to speak, pressed in silence the hand of his kind grandsire and generous brother.

"You have nothing to thank me for," said Charles, comprehending and returning the pressure of his brother's hand, "I must for ever be your debtor, Fiz-Henry, for my introduction to a family, who has been the founder of my success in my honourable profession, and to whom I owe the chief felicity of my life; to you I owe my Seraphina and a regiment!"

In this circle of united friends, love, friendship, and every amiable sentiment, gave them a foretaste of that pure bliss angelic souls taste from the exercise of virtue. The lovers cherished a passion which, although romantic, was of a kind which time must strengthen, instead of lessening; for their attachment was founded on a long, intimate acquaintance with the beloved object which had displayed innumerable perfections, proved reciprocal affection by innumerable trials and convincing tests, giving it the rivet of eternity by a reciprocation of the greatest obligations; for each had been the guardian genius of the other, and had thus cemented an enthusiastic love; whilst general friendship of the tenderest nature, and bonds of consanguinity, united them all by relationship into one family, making their respective fortunes and interest their common advantage.

On the day appointed for the nuptials, the treatries of peace, commerce, and alliance, between the British government of Bengal and Azimabad, were signed in due formality: this was the business of the morning in the durbar: after dinner, according to the customs of India, the marriage ceremonies were to be performed.

Jaffier and Erina, habited in the Eastern mode,

were radiant in beauty as in jewels, shedding lustre around them, and dispensing happiness on all sides by the most graceful courtesy of deportment. Whenever they moved, light in dazzling flashes beamed from their effulgent robes, and from innumerable gems sparkling with the most brilliant water on their habiliments, tiaras, and aigrettes.

The princess was also dressed in a splendidly magnificent Asiatic costume, in honour of her son.

Lady Seraphina wore a superb Spanish habit, in compliment to the marchioness, who was dressed in a similar manner; whilst the marquis and Charles, now colonel O'Brien, retained their respective uniforms, as the highest honour they could pay the happy day, and their profession, their country, and their king.

Fitz-Henry also, in compliment to the occasion, wore the Highland uniform, glorying alike in his character as a British soldier, and in his union with Lady Kinross; who, as a Caledonian countess, and the wife of a highland officer, assumed a plaid, worn in the most graceful manner as a scarf over her snow-white bridal vestments, which consisted of a long-trained robe of the softest lustrous

sarsnet, superbly embroidered in a deep border, with rich silver and foilstones.

Zeleida and Ibrahim, magnificently habited as Asiatics, were led a fourth happy couple to the altar; where the priests joined the hands of the prince and Erina, Charles and Seraphina, and the Asiatic Christians. After which august ceremony, Charles and his bride, and Rosaline and Fitz-Henry, were respectively united by the marquis's chaplain, according to the Protestant form of marriage.

On this joyous occasion Erina and the prince, with the rest of the noble circle, assisted at the baptism of Albion; who used the emancipation from slavery, which, on the death of Lady Engleton, Erina announced to him, to attach himself to her service; and, in consideration of her obligations to the Malabar slave, and his attachment to her, she raised him from his humble station of low dependance to the rank of her page, with a salary adequate to the post, and a handsome addition to it, proportioned to her obligations to him as the public testimony of her gratitude.

By the nuptials now solemnized in sovereign

splendour, the lineage of the ancient Hibernian and Cambrian princes, respectable as a royal race of antiquity, was raised in their descendant, the lovely Erina, who was great in soul, as illustrious in birth, to the sovereignty of an eastern state, whose princes traced their origin to Tamerlane.

The anciently illustrious ancestry of Charles and Fitz-Henry, honoured by the valour and profession of a British soldier, was additionally honoured by their alliances with the best blood of Spain, Scotland, and England. The titles of British nobility, great from the rank, consequence, and fame of the English nation, obtained by the old royal name of Bruce for naval victories, were to be incorporated with the names of Fitz-Henry and O'Brien in the progeny of the Countess of Kinross, Viscountess and Baroness Bruce in the same manner. As the dignity of an English marquisate and earldom, which were the reward of superior genius, and services in the cabinet and field, were by the patent of the marquis of Avondale's nobility to descend by his daughter, to grace the name of O'Brien in the offspring of Charles.

The august circle, by these marriages united in one family, on leaving the chapel beheld a dazzling blaze of splendour that marked more than

common rejoicings: rows of lamps glittering round the arches of the arcades, twining spirally about the innumerable columns of the colonnades, and adorning the architraves with brilliant festoons, shone like diamonds on all sides; whilst every tower and turret displayed aloft some emblematic device in tasteful transparencies, which were surrounded by ranges of lamps beaming radiance. In addition to the glare of light shed from the lower illuminations, every dome and spire, encircled with effulgence, spread from their lofty pinnacles rays of lustre over the spacious squares and the surrounding gardens of the palace, which were illuminated throughout each overshadowed walk, each spreading lawn, and far-extending avenues, to distant temples or triumphal arches, whose splendid decorations glittering from afar, like the refulgence of concentered flames, gave an idea of festive gaiety that exhilarated the spirits to the utmost height.

Within the magnificent edifice every apartment was lighted by immense lustres of the finest brilliancy, and innumerable lamps of dazzling brightness, borne by figures of marble and of bronze, modelled from statues of the best taste, and whose various elegant attitudes gave the sublimest ideas of the sculptor's art.

The finest paintings on the walls and ceilings of the different apartments, thrown open into each other by large arches and folding-doors, seemed to dispute with sculpture the triumph of genius; whilst numberless costly mirrors multiplied the beautiful objects on all sides, gave bright and magically deceptious extent to space, and encreased the brilliancy of the scene, in which gold and silver, glittering on all the furniture, added to the radiance by effulgent reflection. In each of the apartments, numbers of beautiful vases, of every description, were decked with nosegays, and pendant wreaths and festoons of various flowers, to enliven the scene, and give their mingled odours to the breeze, which was circulated by large fans of shining peacocks' feathers, that scattered every where the scent of aromatic fragrance, and the perfume of otto. Music of different kinds was heard throughout the palace, and in all parts of the gardens; for various bands were stationed in the colonnades, and temples and pavilions interspersed amongst the groves, lawns, and alleys, and likewise in barges on the several pieces of water seen from the palace: these barges were superbly decorated with gilding and gay streamers fluttering to the gale, and were illuminated in the most tasteful manner; and whilst they floated on the surface of the water, its clear bosom reflected the moving

splendour, and softened the strains of harmony. As it came on the breeze to the palace, like the sounds of distant echoes, the domes of its rooms rung to melodies, breathing around in sweetest notes, giving an enchantment to the scene, that equally charmed the senses and delighted the heart.

Of this scene the prince and his beauteous consort, united in bridal bonds, appeared like the animating spirit, whilst a sumptuous banquet, served on a superb service of gold, and by a numerous retinue in the different magnificent habits of their offices, concluded the festivities of this night.

At this banquet several Asiatic nobles, and all the British officers in the suite of the marquis, as governor of India and commander in chief, in which station he was obliged to support, in princely splendour, the grandeur of his king and country, were entertained in the most gracious courtesy.

The guests, delighted by the brilliancy and picturesque effect of the court, added to it, and to the festive conviviality.

The prince on this night appeared superior to human nature — Erina looked like an angelic

being: the various talents, the concentration of all perfections, displayed in their figure and mind, rendered this illustrious pair as superlatively charming as they were blessed. The other couples were also supremely engaging; they were each perfect in their respective style: the animated Charles formed a pleasingly contrasted partner for the majestic, languishing, lovely Seraphina. Fitz-Henry's softness was admirably suited to the gentleness of the delicate and sensitively lively Rosaline. In the prince and his lovely bride were concentered the several perfections of their charming friends.

This was a night in which rapture arrived at its supremest elevation; every one of the august circle were in transports of joy. Sir Phelim looked quite juvenile, and declared himself renovated to youth and a long life, to witness the continuation of the present felicity to a distant period; whilst the worthy baronet's health was drank round the festive board.

The whole circle smiled through tears of gratitude and affection. The fulness of ecstasy awakened devotion, and each thinking of the singular adventures which had thus, as it were miraculously, united them after various situations of extreme

danger, had reason to believe *that the machinations of the wicked can never succeed, in materially injuring those who place their trust in Heaven, and steadily pursue the precepts of the Gospel: where it is said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

THE END.

Printed by J. G. Barnard, Snow-hill.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 055267634